

Feb. 17 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1993

Let us summon the courage to seize it.
Thank you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 p.m. in the House Chamber of the Capitol.

Remarks on the Economic Program in St. Louis, Missouri *February 18, 1993*

Thank you. I love these signs: "Our children's future starts today." "Health care for all." "No guts, no glory: Stop gridlock." "The Devil's in the details." That's right, too. [*Laughter*] "Divided we'll go down the tubes." "We want real recovery." I love these signs, and I thank you all for being here today.

Let me begin by saying how much I enjoyed flying down here with Congressman Clay and Congressman Gephardt and with Congressman Volkmer and Congresswoman Danner; they're here, too. They are part of the engine for change that you're going to see move through our Congress. I thank Bill Clay for hosting us in his district, and I want to congratulate him on the passage and this time the signing, not the veto, of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

I want to say how glad I am to be back in St. Louis with your Governor, my longtime friend and early supporter. And I know that he will be a great success, and I'm going to do what I can to be his partner in Washington. I know from clear experience that we don't have all the answers, and I'll do what I can to see that we make as many decisions as possible out here in the Governor's offices where the rubber meets the road. And I thank him for being here.

I want to recognize two of the groups that performed, the Fox High School Band and Harris-Stowe College Choir.

Let me say a word if I might about our majority leader, Dick Gephardt. There is no way that I can convey to the people of St. Louis and Missouri how important he is to the Nation. But I can tell you this: I'm not sure we could do any of the things we have to do if it were not for his leadership. If you knew all the times that he had brought together the other Members of the House of Representatives on the Democratic side and told them they were going to have to cut spending as well as raise money, told them we were going to have to change our priorities, told them we were going to have

to stick together to turn this country around, and been a force for moral leadership within the United States Congress, the heart of every person not just in his district but this whole State would swell with pride to know that you're represented by somebody like that.

If you knew all the times that I heard him stick up in private for the men and women who build the cars and build the airplanes and brew the beer and provide the backbone of America, you would know that he doesn't just say things in public and then behave differently in private. He is the same everywhere. And I am very glad that he is my full partner in this crusade to change our country.

You know, St. Louis is a special place for me. It's here where we ended the first of our wonderful bus trips across America and where we had a rally of about 40,000 people. It was the biggest crowd we'd had at that time in the campaign. And we started our second bus trip over in east St. Louis. And then we had the first Presidential debate here. So I think it's only fitting that I would come to my neighboring State in the heartland of America to start day one of America's new direction.

I was in Missouri on the other side of the State on Labor Day, and I went to Harry Truman's home town. I guess in some ways the talk I gave to Congress last night was like one of President Truman's talks. Some of it was just off the top of my head and from the bottom of my heart. It was sort of plain spoken, and I couldn't figure out how else to say what I think is the plain truth about where we are.

This is a country of enormous promise, of unlimited potential, of a great future burdened by big problems. I think everybody knows that. And we also know, I think, that some mistakes have been made in the course we have taken. The fundamental problems we have are because of big, sweeping changes in history: America being pushed into a global economy, all of us being subject to changes at a far more rapid

rate than ever before.

But we know that the responses we have taken have not worked. There are too many people who are unemployed. There are too many people who are underemployed. There are too many people who have lost good jobs, that cannot get jobs at that income left. There are too many people with no health insurance and too many others terrified of losing it. There are too many people who don't have access to the education over a lifetime that they need to continually be retrained. There are too many places where we are not investing in the future. There are too many industries, like the aerospace industry in Missouri and throughout the country, that we know will produce a huge portion of the high-wage jobs of the future all over the world, and yet, they're dying on the vine here in America. These things don't make sense.

What we have been doing has not worked. We need to take a new direction that will build a high-wage, high-growth, secure future where people can be educated, where there is affordable health care for all, and where Americans have a fair chance to compete and win. That's what this is all about.

I want to repeat to you what I said to the Congress last night. I remember in 1981 when President Reagan said if you stacked 1,000-dollar bills on top of each other, our national debt would go 67 miles into the sky. If you did it today, it would go 267 miles into the sky. I say that not to blame him, not to blame my predecessor, not to blame anybody. Goodness knows, there's enough blame to go around, both parties and the Presidency and the Congress, but what good is it going to do us? Let us forget about blame and take responsibility for our future. Let's do it together. I don't care who gets the credit, I just want us to go forward.

There are already people who are saying that we really can't make fundamental changes. There are people who are saying, "Well, you can't bring the deficit down," or "Well, nobody will hang in there and make these tough budget cuts the President's proposing," or "Well, you can't really reform the health care system," even though we're paying more and getting less for ours than any country on the face of the Earth. I'm tired of all the nay-sayers. I think we can make some changes. But we need your help.

We need your help in two ways: Number one, we need you to show up like this, and we need you to tell your Members of Congress

that we will support you if you make the honest, tough, hard decisions. We know we didn't get into this mess overnight. We're not going to get out of it overnight. But we cannot keep doing the same old thing. The price of doing the same thing is higher than the price of change.

The second thing you can do is to support your Members of Congress by demanding real political reform that will protect them in making courageous changes. Tell them you want a campaign finance reform bill that will limit the cost of congressional campaigns, limit the influence of special interests, and open this process to all people.

Tell them you want something done to make sure all of the lobbyists in Washington have to register and report on their activities; two-thirds of them don't. Tell them you support our bill to remove the tax deduction for lobbying activities. You are subsidizing interests that together undermine your future. Individually they've all got a good story to tell, but collectively they help to paralyze the political process. And you, at least, should not subsidize it with your tax dollars because you don't have comparable deductions.

My fellow Americans, last night I tried to lay out to the Congress and to the American people a plan that will change the direction of this country and give us a genuine economic strategy, a plan to produce more jobs, higher income, deal with the health care crisis, provide a lifetime system of education, and reduce the national debt. We have to begin with the Government, and at the top with the President.

So I have tried to set an example. I have cut the White House staff by 25 percent. That will be in my budget for the White House. I have cut the administrative costs of the executive branch in my budget 14 percent over the next 4 years, over and above the cuts in the White House, and we'll reduce employment, not by firing people but by attrition, by 100,000 over the next 4 years. That will save \$9 billion. And yesterday the leaders of the House and the Senate announced that the Congress would follow our lead and cut their budgets by that much, which I think is good.

There are 150 other specific cuts in this budget, including some that were very tough for me to recommend, some in programs that don't make any sense anymore. For example, do you remember when we had the Bicentennial cele-

bration in 1976? There is still a Bicentennial Commission. Our Government's great at starting things and not very good at stopping things. So we eliminated a lot of things that ought to be stopped.

The second thing we did was to reduce our investment in programs that have done a lot of good, but where the amount you're spending can't be justified anymore, including one that was really close to my heart. We recommended a reduction in the Federal subsidy to the Rural Electric Administration, something that serves a lot of people in my State and yours. But America is 100 percent electrified now, and we ought not to have the full subsidy continued from all of the rest of the people who get their electricity from someplace else.

We recommended some unwarranted subsidies be eliminated because the need for the work is much less or nonexistent anymore. For example, we recommended a big cutback in a lot of programs related to the nuclear industry and the elimination of a nuclear research program that is inconsistent with our new energy future.

We recommended some big changes in the environmental Superfund program: one, to make the polluters pay more and the taxpayers pay less and the second, to get the money freed up so that we can use the money to clean up pollution. It's all going to lawyer fees now, because people don't want anything to happen. We're going to try to make it work.

Finally, I recommended—and this was difficult for me because I can't do anything as your President in the end without the support of the fine people in the Federal work force—but we recommended a freeze on Federal pay raises for a year and modest pay raises for the next 3, because that saves billions of dollars that we don't have to take out of the rest of the people in taxes to reduce the deficit.

So there are 150 tough cuts. Now, let me say I've already heard some people on the other side of the aisle say, "Well, he should have cut more." And my answer is: Show me where, but be specific. No hot air. Show me where, and be specific.

And since I am here in Missouri, I think I will repeat that. Show me. And I say that not in the spirit of partisanship but in the spirit of genuine challenge. I know there is more that we can eliminate. I am honestly looking. I've just been there 4 weeks and a day, and I'm

nowhere near through. And I want you to help me, and I want them to help me.

Let me say also, the burdens in terms of taxes I think are imposed in a fair way. The rates of 98.9 percent of Americans will not be raised. Late in the last election, the New York Times carried a front-page story showing that 70 percent of the gains of the 1980's had been reaped by the top one percent of the people. This plan asked the top 1.2 percent of the people to have an income tax increase. This plan asked companies with incomes of over \$10 million to match that income tax increase.

This plan raises over 70 percent of the funds from people with incomes above \$100,000. This plan raises no money from people with incomes below \$30,000. And indeed, because we increased the refundable income tax credit, this plan, if it passes, will enable us to do something I would think every American would be proud of. For the first time ever, if this plan passes, we can say to the people of this country: Look, we are rewarding work and family. If you work full-time and you've got a kid in your house, you won't live in poverty because of the changes we're going to have in the tax system.

People making \$40,000, \$50,000, in that range, will pay about \$17 a month under this plan. But let me tell you, a lot of those people, many of whom are in this station today, may wind up not being out any more money for this reason: Just since the election, since I said we're going to have a tough plan to reduce this debt, long-term interest rates have gone down. If you take only the reduction in interest rates which have occurred from the election day until this day, for everybody who gets the benefit of those lower interest rates in a home mortgage, a car payment, consumer credit, you will make more in lower interest rates than you'll pay in the energy tax if we can show that we're serious about cutting spending and cutting this deficit. We've got to do it.

One final thing which you'll also hear about from people who oppose this plan: I do propose to spend some more money, but not in the old way. Look at what we spend it for. We have reduced Government consumption. We have reduced inessential programs. But we increase spending on jobs: a jobs program to create a half a million jobs starting right now in building roads, repairing streets, fixing airports, cleaning up the environment with water systems and sewer systems; a million summer jobs for

young people, if I could get the private sector to contribute to the 700,000 we're going to create in the Government.

This program invests in opening the doors of college education to all people and giving them a chance to pay the loan back on favorable terms or to pay it back with service to our country. This plan will put 100,000 police officers on the streets of America over the next 4 years. This plan will give us a chance to invest in the new technologies that will create jobs for the people who have lost their jobs in the defense industries and in other big industries that have been downscaling.

We have got to create some new jobs in this country, for goodness sakes. You can have all the other programs in the world, and unless we do it, we're going to be in trouble.

And this plan will reduce the deficit by hundreds of billions of dollars over the next 5 years. And I ask you, I ask you to support it not just for you but for us, not just for narrow interest but for the national interest. I believe it will be good for virtually every American.

Today as we speak, a lot of big corporate executives are endorsing this plan, even though their income tax bills will go up, their companies' bills will go up, because they want a healthy, strong, well-educated, vibrant America with an investment climate that's good, with stable interest rates, with a declining deficit, with a health care issue addressed, and with a country that can grow into the 21st century. So a lot of the people who are paying this bill are going to support it because they trust us.

And let me say this: We need you to hold our feet to the fire. No raising taxes unless we cut spending.

We've got to do this in a package, and we've got to do it together. I need your help. I'm delighted to see you here today. With your help we can make the spirit of St. Louis the spirit of America.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:59 p.m. at Union Station. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mel Carnahan of Missouri.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session on the Economic Program in Chillicothe, Ohio

February 19, 1993

The President. Thank you very much. Let me say, first of all, what a wonderful time I have had in your community since I arrived last night. I have seen a lot of your fellow citizens who did not win the lottery. [Laughter] They were out by the Comfort Inn where we stayed last night, and they were around the city park where—the Mayor and I went jogging this morning around the city park. It was 3 degrees, which I suppose means I don't have enough sense to be President. [Laughter] But we had a wonderful time. We ran around the park three times and saw some students from the school, and we saw some city employees and others. I flew in here with Congressman Strickland last night, and we had a great visit on the way in. I'm glad to see him over here.

And so between the two of them I know a lot about this congressional district and a good deal about this community. I know it has a lot of beautiful old buildings—I saw them this

morning—and was the first capital of Ohio. I also know it has a nice new McDonald's—[laughter]—because I went there this morning. Good to see you. [Applause] How embarrassing.

Let me say, too, I want to thank your school officials, Superintendent Cline and your principal, Rod Jenkins. And Melissa Hagen did a good job, don't you think? I thought she did a really good job. Maybe she'll be coming back here someday to hold a town meeting like this; you can't tell.

I also want to say—I just have a couple of notes. Normally I don't use them, and I want to put them down, but I asked for some notes about some people in the crowd because they illustrate what to me this effort that I have undertaken as your President is all about.

Is John Cochran here? Is he here anywhere? John, are you here? Stand up there. Now, my notes say that he has 16 children—and you're one of them—[laughter]—that he has the largest