

Remarks to Students at Hillsborough Community College in Tampa, Florida

March 30, 1995

The President. Thank you very much, Bill Lanthripp, for that introduction. Thank you, President Paloumpis, and thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for making me feel so very, very welcome here today. I also want to thank those of you who brought the little children here; it's wonderful to see them—that little girl back there in her green dress and that little girl there, this young man there; you look great. Thank you.

I want to thank some of my partners in trying to make your future better who are here with me, your Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Lawton Chiles and Buddy McKay. I thank my friend Congressman Gibbons for being here, the speaker of the house, Peter Wallace, and your representative, the majority leader of the house, Jim Davis. I thank them all for being here.

I also want to say that I almost got here in time—I got here a day ahead of the new mayor's inauguration, so I want to thank, on the next-to-the-last day of her tenure, my long-time friend, your mayor, Sandy Freedman, for doing such a good job for Tampa. And I want to wish your new mayor, Dick Greco, all the best, and I look forward to working with you.

Ladies and gentlemen, if I could start on a more serious note, I just had the opportunity to meet at the airport with the families of the two Tampa police officers, Mike Vigil and Kevin Howell, who were shot and wounded last week. I also had the opportunity to meet an HCC student, Mike Meyer, who saved one of those officers' lives because he's a certified emergency medical technician. He told the police he was a paramedic, and they brought him there. He grabbed his bag and rushed to the fallen officers, and he did a very fine job. And I had a chance to thank him for that, and it's an encouragement to all of us to learn some of the skills that he knows. You never can tell when you will need them. I understand that Officer Vigil remains in critical but stable condition, but I was just informed by his family that the doctors say his chances are now better than 50-50 that he's going to make a good recovery.

I am delighted to be back in Florida. I had the opportunity to spend the night at the Gov-

ernor's mansion last night and to address the Florida Legislature today about the challenges facing our country and what we're going to do about it. Today I want to talk to you about your future. I spend a lot of time in community colleges like this one, because I think in many ways this is the most important institution in American society as we move toward the next century.

With all of the challenges we face, we basically know what works. What works is educating all of our people; what works is doing what it takes to generate more jobs; what works is bringing people together across racial and income and other lines; what works is a commitment to give more people a shot at the American dream, to grow the middle class and to shrink the under class, and to prepare for the future. And that's what community colleges do.

In a very real sense, what I have been trying to do as President is to bring that spirit and those ideas into the National Government. I've worked for a dozen years as a Governor, in which time I had the honor and privilege to spend countless hours in educational institutions, from elementary schools to community colleges, to vocational training schools, to our 4-year universities. And I found when I went to Washington that every reason that I worried about the country when I ran for President turned out to be true.

I ran because I thought this country was on the verge of a new century, dominated by the end of the cold war, the emergence of the global economy, wealth tied more to knowledge than ever before, when we had new opportunities but new challenges, and that Washington was in the grip of old-fashioned partisan political rhetoric, dividing us when we needed to be united, holding us back when we needed to go forward.

Now we are all engaged in a great debate which you hear every day on the news as you watch events unfold about what your Government should be doing in this moment. The old view was that there was a Government solution in Washington for every big problem in the country and that Government could actually

help people with big problems. Well, we know that that's not exactly right; they're not one-size-fits-all, Government knows best, out of Washington. And we know that there are great limits on how much Government can help people to fulfill their abilities.

The new rage is to say that the Government is the cause of all of our problems and if only we had no Government, we'd have no problems. I can tell you, that contradicts evidence, history, and common sense. Now, the truth is—so the question is, what are we going to do? I can tell you what my view is, and it is different from either extreme.

I believe we need a Government that doesn't pretend to be a savior but that doesn't sit on the sidelines. I believe in a partnership. I believe that the National Government's mission at the end of this century is as follows: Number one, we ought to be creating opportunity and demanding responsibility. Number two, I think we ought to be doing everything we can to empower the American people through education for a lifetime to make the most of their own lives. Number three, I believe we ought to be enhancing the security of the American people, not only by making the world a safer place but by making our streets and our schools and our homes and our workplaces safer places. And number four, I think we have got to dramatically change the National Government to make it smaller, less bureaucratic, less meddlesome, but still helpful to move this country forward.

Now, if you look at the record in creating opportunity, we have brought down the deficit, we have expanded trade, we have increased our investments in new technology, and in the last 2 years our Nation has produced over 6 million new jobs. The unemployment rate in Florida has dropped 3 percent from 7.4 to 4.3 percent. We are clearly moving forward and creating more opportunity.

If you look at the empowerment issue, we have increased investments in education, everything from expanding Head Start to expanding the efforts of States to make apprenticeships for people who don't go to college, to dramatically—and I mean dramatically—increasing the availability of scholarships for middle class people to get a higher education.

If you ask, well, what have we done on security, well, look around the world. We are making progress in troublesome areas of the world like the Middle East, in bringing peace, and North-

ern Ireland. We have made agreements with Russia and with other countries in the former Soviet Union to drastically reduce the number of nuclear weapons. And for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, there are no nuclear missiles pointed at the children of the United States of America.

Now, if you ask what have we done to reduce the size of Government—and I want to compliment Governor Chiles for his leadership in this. Florida is one of the—really, the groundbreaking State in America, I think, in slashing unnecessary regulation, and I congratulate him on that.

What are we doing in Washington? Well, we've reduced the size of the Federal bureaucracy by 100,000. We're going to reduce it by 270,000 over 5 years. It'll be the smallest Federal Government since John Kennedy was President of the United States.

We have reduced the Government deficit so much that if it weren't for interest on the debt incurred in the 12 years before I showed up, we'd have a surplus today, not a deficit in the Government account. We're paying our operating bills.

We're now giving Government regulators the authority not to fine people the first time they make a mistake. And Carol Browner, from Florida, who's the head of the EPA, has opened up an office in which people, good, honest business people can go and say, "Look, I'm afraid I'm in violation of some environmental law," and instead of getting a fine they'll get 6 months to fix it. We have changed the rules so that now if somebody makes a mistake in good faith, our Federal agencies have the right not to fine people but to say, "You keep the fine if you'll spend it in fixing the problem, making the workplace safer, making the environment cleaner."

So we are moving forward. With this new Congress, we are finding some areas of agreement that are quite important. I signed a law that I campaigned for President to support that applies to Congress all the laws they put on the private sector. I think it's high time.

I signed a law the other day which limits the ability of the Congress to impose upon State governments and local governments so-called unfunded mandates, requiring them to raise your taxes because of something people in Washington want, instead of what you decided the mayor should do or the Governor and the State legislature should do. And it's high time.

And we're about to get agreement—we passed a line-item veto, which most Governors have, which allows a President to go into a big bill, where a lot of pork-barrel spending might be hidden with a lot of good things so you can't afford to veto the bill, and find the pork. And we're going to get that passed soon. And that's a good thing.

But there still are some disagreements. And the American people, without regard to their party, will have to be heard on these disagreements, because you have to decide what you think the main mission of our country is. Is the main mission to make sure there is no Federal Government, or is the main mission to grow the middle class, shrink the under class, and support family and community and the future of this country? I think that is what the main mission of this country is.

And let me give you some ideas. With all the cutting of the budget we have done—and last year, I gave the Congress the first budget in 25 years that cut defense and domestic spending together. Only medical costs went up because of inflation. Everything else was cut. But I did not cut, within that, education. We increased our investment in education. Why? Because—look around you—it is the future of America.

So are we going to grow the middle class, shrink the under class, and be a safer country if more poor little kids go through Head Start? I think we are. Are we going to grow the middle class if more kids who get out of high school but don't want to go to college at least get 2 years of some kind of training afterward in a community college, that type of thing? I think we are. Will we be growing the middle class and shrinking the under class if every person who wants to go to college can get a college loan at a lower cost and a better repayment schedule? I think we are.

So this is a big decision we have to make in Washington. Let me give you a clear, explicit example. I recommended that we could save some money and do a better job by our young people if we changed the college loan program, because it was a big bureaucracy. You know it was a guarantee, so the Government would guarantee a loan a bank would give you. The bank charges a fee; then if somebody doesn't pay it back, the bank gets 90 percent of the money from the Government. So they never sue, because the lawyer fee would cost more

than 10 percent. Right? We were spending, when I became President, \$1.8—\$2.8 billion a year of your money for delinquent loans, because people weren't paying their student loans.

Colleges and universities were complaining all over America that the paperwork was driving them bananas to process the student loans. The students were complaining that they couldn't get the loans in a hurry. And then when they had to repay them on a 10-year schedule, if you borrowed a whole bunch of money, you couldn't take a job that you might want if it has a salary so low you could never make your loan repayment. And it didn't just apply to people in what you call public service jobs.

Yesterday in Atlanta, I had an economic forum, and I had two married medical students, a husband and wife from the University of Florida, come and testify. They are 4th-year medical students. They will owe \$140,000 when they get out of medical school. You say, "Well, doctors make a lot of money." They do, but not when they're residents. Right? They were going to literally have to spend one-half of their income, combined, paying off their students loans while they're residents working 60, 70, 80 hours a week. Under our plan, they can pay it off as a percentage of their income. So when they start making money, they pay more. But now they get to make a living and work and become doctors. It's a better system.

So how does this affect you? Today, 40 percent of American institutions are eligible to participate in that. What I said is, let's let everybody participate. We'll cut the fraud rate. We've already taken it from \$2.8 billion down to \$1 billion a year. We've cut the fraud by nearly two-thirds. We'll cut the cost of the program. We'll loan more money to more students. We'll be less trouble to the institutions of higher education, and the deficit will go down because we'll save \$6 billion. That was my proposal.

Now, here is the other proposal in the Congress. The other proposal is: Leave the banks with the money; cap the number of colleges that can participate at 40 percent; and instead, make students start paying interest on their loans while they're in college—add \$2 billion a year to the cost of college.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. To me, I don't think you have to be Einstein to conclude that does not make sense. Let's stay with our program. Let's save

money and educate people and not go back to charging people more for student loans.

Let me tell you something else. There's a lot of talk about tax cuts in Washington today. There is a limit to how much we can cut taxes because the deficit's big. We need to keep bringing the deficit down. But I believe we should have a modest tax cut for middle class people, targeted to raising incomes and increasing the wealth of the country over the long run. Don't just write people a check. Give people who are playing by the rules some incentives to do more. That's why my bill says let's give people a tax deduction for the cost of education after high school. Get more people to get educated and do that. Why? Why? Because it's just like the GI bill after World War II: Everybody who goes to school is going to make a higher income and pay more taxes and run the deficit down and run the wealth of the country up. And if we keep it disciplined and small, we can afford it.

But we can't afford just to go out here with these huge tax cuts with the deficit of the country as big as it is. The reason the Florida economy dropped in unemployment by 3 percent is that we brought the deficit down and increased our investment and expanded trade. So we got interest rates down and business opportunities up and generated more jobs. The most important thing is to keep the American people working and get their incomes up. And that's what we have to do.

Now, you will see these debates over and over and over again. I want to mention two more, because they affect you. We're having a big argument about what to do about crime. Well, we finally passed a tough crime bill last year. Your mayor helped us pass it. Your Governor, your attorney general, your law enforcement official helped us pass it.

And what that crime bill does is it says—first of all, it was virtually written by law enforcement officials—it says that we should have the National Government do three things to help bring the crime rate down: Help the States build more prisons so we don't let dangerous criminals out too soon; help local communities give kids something to say yes to and not just something to say no to, so we prevent crime and keep people out of trouble; and have a 20 percent increase in the police forces of the country so we can catch criminals and prevent crime. Those are the three things we did.

Now, the Congress has proposed to reduce the amount of money we're spending on the crime bill, but require the States to spend more on prisons and spend less on police and prevention, and tell the communities, do whatever you want to with the money. And I'm opposed to that, and I want you to know why. Violent crime has tripled in the last 30 years, and we have to do something about it—all kinds of violent crime. I just announced last week that the former attorney general of Iowa, Bonnie Campbell, is going to head the first-ever division of the Justice Department on domestic violence, violence against parents and children. We have to do something about this.

Now, in 30 years, violent crime triples, but the police forces of the country increase by only 10 percent. You don't have to be a genius to figure out that there's some connection between a huge increase in crime and nearly no increase in the police force. How are they supposed to do what they're doing? Not to mention how much better armed the criminals have become—right?—which is part of the problem with these fine police officers.

Now, we know also that one of the good news stories that often does not get told in this country is—I have seen this with my own eyes—there's city after city after city where the crime rate has gone down because of strategies that have been adopted, like some of the strategies adopted right here in Tampa. When you put people out and you deploy police in the proper way and they work with people in the community, they not only catch criminals quicker but they also deter crime. I have seen it all across America. This is a good deal. Florida has already been awarded funds for more than 960 police officers, 18 of them right here in Tampa. We don't need to tamper with the crime bill. We ought to stay with it and implement it.

I'm just going to give you one last example, because we have to decide what kind of country we're going to be and what we're going to do together. These young people that were introduced over here, the AmeriCorps volunteers—and they clapped and I was glad to see them—they're part of our national service program. It's a program basically to bring the idea of the Peace Corps to the streets of America. It's a program designed to say, "If you will work, essentially, for minimum wage for a year, we'll give you about the equivalent college education

benefit of the GI bill, if you'll help us to deal with our security problems here at home, help to volunteer and to rebuild America here at home."

Now, there are those who say, "Well, we can't afford this. It's too expensive." We have 20,000 young Americans in AmeriCorps today, thousands of more who want to get in, who want to work for minimum wage and earn this education credit and build up our country. There are more people in AmeriCorps today than ever served in the Peace Corps in any single year in its history since President Kennedy started it, because the American people are dying to get out there and do something to lift this country up.

Let me just give you a couple of examples. Two years ago, just 89 of our volunteers immunized 104,000 infants in poor areas in Texas. Believe me, they paid for the whole program in that one year. Here in Florida after the hurricane, our volunteers, working with Habitat for Humanity, built 75 homes, and they built them quicker and better because of that.

These AmeriCorps volunteers are from Pinellas County. They're members of three local law enforcement agencies involved in community police departments, the Clearwater department, the St. Petersburg department and the county sheriff's office. They're working together to make what I just talked to you about, community policing, a reality, to make the streets safer. They're out there doing things that uniformed officers don't have to do that lower the crime rate and make people safer. That is what we ought to be doing. I think it is worth the investment.

I'm cutting spending as quick as I can. We've cut more spending in the last 2 years than had been cut in a month of Sundays, and I will cut more, and I will work with the Congress to cut more. But it is not right to cut out AmeriCorps. We should be lifting up young people like this and giving them a chance to serve.

So I want you to be a part of this. America needs to work like the community colleges work: People get in, and they're just judged based on their merit, and everybody gets a fair shot.

And you know if you conclude the course, you've got a good chance to get a job and a better chance to live out your dreams. That's the way this country ought to work. It ought to be flexible, unbureaucratic, changing to meet the needs of a changing society, but it requires a partnership between the public sector and the private sector.

Your Government in Washington, I am doing my best to change it to make it more like this. But we are creating opportunity, we are empowering people, we are enhancing our security, and we are downsizing this Government. We are making America a better place together. And I urge you to enter this debate and tell everybody that you can, we do not need more of the old-fashioned, hot air, partisan political rhetoric. We need a strategy to move this country forward.

And let me say this in closing, I got a letter the other day from a guy I went to grade school with. And he said, "You know, Bill, one of the problems that you're having as President is that you're living out your dream. But too many people our age are living with broken dreams." I ran for this job because I wanted all the people my age to be able to live their dreams and because I want you younger people here to be able to look forward to a life that is full and rich as the one I've enjoyed. And those of you that are young and don't have any children yet, I want you to think about having children with an atmosphere of excitement and hope and conviction that your kids will see America's best days. And I'm telling you, if we will keep our heads on straight and think about how we can pull together instead of how we can be driven apart, we will do that.

God bless you, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:34 p.m. in the gymnasium at the Dale Mabry Campus. In his remarks, he referred to William Lanthripp, president, Dale Mabry Campus Student Government Association; Andreas A. Paloumpis, president, Hillsborough Community College; and student John Meyer.

Remarks on the Major League Baseball Strike and an Exchange With Reporters in Tampa March 30, 1995

The President. Since I'm here in Florida, it might be appropriate to say something about the baseball situation. The judge is going to hand down a ruling, apparently, pretty soon. And I would just say, if the injunction stays and the players do again state their willingness to go back to work, then I hope they won't be locked out. I think it gives us a chance at least to start the baseball season in a good way and without the replacement players.

Ultimately, of course, they're still going to have to work this out, and they're going to have to do it by some mutual agreement. But we may be given an opportunity in the next couple of days to have a baseball season. And if that opportunity arises and the players are willing to go back, then I hope the owners won't lock them out.

CIA and Guatemala

Q. [Inaudible]—CIA covered up the murder in Guatemala?

The President. Well, we have no information to that effect. We are looking into all the allegations. And I have taken exceptional steps to make sure that there is a good investigation and to make sure that the records are secure. I think I should do that. As you know, this relates to events that occurred before I became President. But we need to know the facts, and we're going to do everything we can to find out the facts.

Haiti

Q. Is there any evidence that—any evidence that Aristide's people were behind the assassination?

The President. President Aristide immediately asked for help to investigate the action. Indeed, the people who were down there were working before to try to head off any political violence leading up to the handover this weekend. And as soon as the killing occurred, he asked for help, and we had dispatched immediately a substantial team from the FBI. So I think that is significant evidence that he wants to get to the bottom of this and that he's keeping his word not to support political violence.

There are many factions there. They've done a good job of keeping down political violence. They don't need to start it again. What they need to do is to keep things calm, maintain a low crime rate, continue to work with the United Nations, and rebuild that country. We only have, I think, 6,000 of the 35,000 factory workers who were working before the military coup back working. So we need to keep working on building the country. And that's what I'm going to say when I go down there.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 3 p.m. at Tampa Bay International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to President Jean-Bertrand Aristide of Haiti and to the March 28 assassination of President Aristide's political opponent Mireille Durocher Bertin.

Statement on the Major League Baseball Strike March 30, 1995

For the first time in months there is reason for some optimism for those of us who are hoping for a 1995 baseball season with real major league players.

The players have agreed to return to work if the district court judge issues an injunction.

If the judge does grant the injunction, I hope the owners decide to let the players play ball.

In October, in an attempt to assist the parties, we appointed Bill Userly as special mediator with the hope that he could bring the owners and players together at the bargaining table, where