

Internet access and voice mail to all California schools. Sprint will help to connect the schools. MCI will provide software for entry into the Internet and help to connect the schools. And Pacific Bell, which has led the way in linking California schools, is accelerating its efforts this school year by hooking them up to high-speed phone lines.

I want to thank them all, and I'd like to ask the leaders of these companies here to stand, and I hope the children will give them a hand, because they've done a great thing for your future. Please stand up, all of you who met with me earlier today. Thank you so much. *[Applause]*

This is an enormous effort. It will take the same spirit and tenacity that built our railroads and highways. It will take leadership and dedication of groups like the advisory council I have appointed on the information superhighway. So let us begin. Let today mark the start of our mission to connect every school in America by the year 2000. If we can connect 20 percent of the schools in the largest State in the Nation in less than a year, we can surely connect the rest of the country by the end of the decade.

In the coming days, I will announce the winners of our technology learning challenge. And over the next several weeks, I will put forward a public-private partnership plan that lays out how we can move our entire nation toward the goal of technological literacy for every young person in America.

Here are its guiding principles: modern computers in every classroom, accessible to every student from kindergarten through 12th grade; networks that connect students to other students, schools to other schools, and both to the

world outside; educational software that is worthy of our children and their best aspirations; and finally, teachers with the training and the assistance they need to make the most of these new technologies.

Make no mistake: You can count on us for leadership, but the goal we have set cannot be set and cannot be achieved by Government alone. It can only be met the way these companies are doing it, with communities, businesses, governments, teachers, parents, and students all joining together, a high-tech barn-raising.

What we are doing is the equivalent of going to a dusty adobe settlement in early 19th century California and giving every child a slate and a piece of chalk to write with. It's akin to walking into a rough-hewn classroom in the Sierras of the 1860's and wiring it for electricity for the first time. It's like going to the Central Valley in the 1930's to the canvas classrooms of the Dust Bowl refugees and giving every child a book. Chalk boards, electricity, accessible books, there was a time, believe it or not, when all these were rare. Now, every one is such a familiar part of our lives that we take them for granted.

If we stay on course, we'll soon reach a day when children and their parents and their teachers will walk into a classroom filled with computers and not even give it a second thought. Let's go to work. Our future depends upon it, and these children's lives will be better for it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:42 a.m. in the Rotunda. In his remarks, he referred to Goery Delacote, Exploratorium director, and Mayor Frank Jordan of San Francisco.

Remarks at a Clinton/Gore '96 Luncheon in San Francisco *September 21, 1995*

Well, Mr. Vice President, you convinced me. *[Laughter]* I think I'll just play you a tune on Clarence's saxophone and leave. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank you all so much for being here, for the support that you have given to me and to Al Gore and to our family and our administration. I wish that Hillary could be here today, but we've been gone all week, and she

had to stay in Washington to receive an award a couple of days ago from the Save the Children Foundation. So we're sort of out here on our own, but—*[applause]*. I thank Dick Bloom and Walter Shorenstein and Ernest Gallo and Sean Lowe and my friend Susie Tompkins, all of you, for your leadership on this very outstanding event and all the rest of you who have done

so much to help this administration to continue to do the work that we are about. I thank Reverend Cecil Williams for being here to pray over us and get us off to a good start. And I thank Clarence Clemons who, whenever I played saxophone with him, I loved it, because he was big enough and loud enough and good enough to cover all my sins. [Laughter] I loved that. And I thank the Glide Memorial Ensemble from your gospel choir for being here. You were wonderful today. Thank you so much. They put me in the proper frame of mind for what I want to say to you. You know, my first exposure to Reverend Williams and Glide Memorial was on Mother's Day in 1992 when I was running for office. And I got to talk about my mother. And at the time, I couldn't have known it, but I just had one more Mother's Day with her. And I never will forget the way I felt in that magnificent church with all those people coming together. They were all so different. Some were very wealthy, and some were living on the street. They were of all different backgrounds and all different dispositions toward life, but they were united there. That's what America is when we're at our best, when we're getting together and working together.

It is no secret to anyone who lives in California and who's been through all the tumultuous ups and downs of the last few years that we are living in a time of profound change. And we have to decide how we're going to respond to that change. The challenge that I issue is more complicated because it requires all of us to do something. The other prevailing vision just tells you the Government's the problem, and if you get rid of it, everything will be all right.

I understand from long experience why that's more attractive. One of Clinton's laws of politics is that everybody's for change in general, but they're against in particular. [Laughter] And I have one famous story that comes out of my own political heritage in the South about Huey Long during the Depression when he was going around telling everyone in Louisiana they should share the wealth because 30 percent of the people were out of work and the rest of them were poor, and he could always get elected on his share-the-wealth platform in the Depression. And once he was out on a country crossroads, and he was giving his speech. And he identified a farmer in the crowd that he knew, who he thought was absolutely certain that he could make the point he wanted to make. And he

said, "I see Farmer Jones out there." He said, "Now let me ask you something. If you had three Cadillacs, wouldn't you give us one of them to go around on all these country roads and gather up the children and take them to school during the week and take them to church on the weekends?" He said, "Of course I would." He said, "And if you had \$3 million, wouldn't you give us a million dollars so that we could put a roof over every family's head in this county and feed every family?" He said, "Of course I would." He said, "And if you had three hogs—" And the farmer said, "Now, wait a minute, Governor, I've got three hogs." [Laughter] So every one is for change in general, but when you get particular, then it's another thing altogether.

And what I want to say to you is, we have no choice. I believe when the history of this era is written, people will say that the period from about—well, the—sometime around the mid-1980's until the first decade or so of the next century was the period of greatest economic and social change, the biggest changes in the way we live and work that America has experienced in 100 years, since roughly 1895 to 1916 when we moved from being an agricultural and rural country to a more urbanized and more industrial nation.

That's the depth of the change that is going on. We're now moving into, as all of you know in California, an age dominated by information and technology, even in agriculture and industry. We're moving out of a cold war environment, where the world was largely organized among nation-states and two big camps into a global economy, where the world is often disorganized, and where all the forces are toward economic unity and global trade but political and social disintegration. In its sharpest sense, you see it manifested in racial and ethnic and religious hatred, whether it's a war in the Balkans or the horrible things in Rwanda and Burundi or a bus blowing up in Israel or sarin gas breaking open in the subway in Japan or the awful bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma City.

It is, in short, a world that is full of possibility, the most exciting period the world has ever known and full of challenge. And it is clear that we have to bring to this new world a flexibility, an openness, a willingness to embrace new ideas and new approaches. It is also clear that we have to have a clear idea about where we want to go. My vision for this country in

the 21st century is of a high opportunity nation, where we grow a lot of entrepreneurs every year and we expand our middle class and shrink our under class, where we empower individuals to make the most of their own lives and families and communities to solve their own problems and where we define ourselves in terms of what we can do together, not how we can divide one another.

The Governor of Florida was with the Vice President and me a couple of days ago, and he said—in another fast-growing, multiethnic State—he said, “We have to decide whether we are going to be a community or a crowd. A crowd is a collection of people in the same place who swarm all over each other seeking their individual interests, and the fittest survive and the others don’t do very well. A community is a collection of people that band together and think they’ll all do better if they all do well. And so they have obligations to one another which they recognize.”

That’s my vision. To get there, we’ve got to have a lot of new ideas, but we have to be faithful to our fundamental values, to supporting freedom and responsibility; to helping families raise their children; to helping all people make the most of their own lives; to holding people accountable for what they do that is destructive of our common purposes; to standing up for America here at home and for our best values and our better selves around the world; to finding common ground instead of cheap, short-run, partisan gain; and to doing what is important for the long run, even if it’s unpopular in the short run.

I say that because there are a lot of perplexing problems that require us to do this. And I’ll just give you two. If I had told any of you the day I was inaugurated that within 30 months we would have, working with the American people, created conditions which would produce 7½ million new jobs; 2½ million new homeowners; 2 million new small businesses with entrepreneurs growing in America; businesses at three-quarter of a million a year, a rate never before achieved; the largest number of new self-made millionaires in our history; a stock market at 4,700; that all of these things would occur, but the earnings of the guy in the middle would go down one percent, you’d have a hard time believing that, wouldn’t you? But that’s what’s happened, because in the global economy, those in wealthy countries, not just the United States

but in all wealthy countries, who are not plugged in to the growth and opportunity of the future will be punished, will be rendered more insecure. And within their family lives, their community lives, their aspirations for the future, their ability to impart the American dream to their children will be impaired.

So we have to figure out how to keep these good things going but how to bring the rest of America on board. That’s why this computer initiative being undertaken by these major California companies was so important. I looked at those schoolchildren that we had gathered today, from all their different backgrounds, from all walks of life; I saw the Asian children and the Hispanic children and the white children. And then I ran up to a little girl, and she said, “Mr. President, I was born in Stevens, Arkansas, and I’m living here in California with my grandmother.” Stevens is a little country town full of people who go to church every Sunday and sing songs like you just heard. All this is a very different country. We’ve got to get everybody on board.

I’ll give you another example. The Vice President talked about our crime bill. America is, believe it or not, is actually making progress in the war against crime and in the war to reassert social responsibility. In virtually every major area in this country, the crime rate is down. The murder rate is down. The welfare rolls are down as the economy improves. The food stamp rolls are down. Almost everywhere this is so. Drug use among people between the ages of 18 and 34 is down. That’s the good news. Against this background, it is shocking that the rate of violent crimes committed by juveniles between 12 and 17 years of age is up. And casual drug use among people between the ages of 12 and 17 is up. This is a perplexing thing. Too many of these children are out there raising themselves. Too many of them get out of school too early with nothing else to do. Too many of them have problems that are treated only with the kind of harshness that may be appropriate for some but won’t save anybody from getting in trouble in the first place.

And nobody has all the answers. So we have to be open to new ideas, rooted in old values, because we want this to be a strong country, but we’ve got to get these kids on board. We can’t lose a whole generation of Americans. We can’t have people think that life is only about power and money.

Did you see the story the other day that said two-thirds of kids between—who belong to gangs who are under 18 think it's okay to shoot somebody who disrespects them? And then about a week later you had a 16-year-old in New York kill a 12-year-old because he thought he'd been disrespected. It turned out the kid had a great sense of humor and was just—made fun of everybody. It cost him his life. What about counting to 10 before you do anything? What about, "Sticks and stones will break my bones." Or the family, you know, that was subject to the hail of bullets because they lost their way in Los Angeles the other day? It's not just violence—we have come to see children as a class of people as something to be marketed. What I said yesterday in Denver—maybe I'm just getting old-fashioned, but I just came out of my shoes when I saw those teenagers depicted the way they were in those Calvin Klein ads. I thought it was wrong. I thought it was wrong.

But the main point I want to make is, we've got to realize that we're making progress on these big problems, but we have these problems underneath. So we need to keep doing what we're doing, but we need to be humble about it and recognize that we've got to have new ideas rooted in old-fashioned values. That's what this budget debate is all about. It is not fundamentally about money. Fundamentally it's about whether we're going to be a community or a crowd and what our obligations to each other are.

And I just want to mention one or two things. I favor balancing the budget. We never had a permanent deficit in our budget that was structural until 1981. We quadrupled the debt of this country in 12 years. It's so bad that the budget would be in balance today, and we'd have more money to give California for defense conversion, but the interest rate we pay on the debt run up between 1981 and the day I became President has thrown us into a deficit this year. That's the only thing putting us in deficit. And if we don't do something about it, next year interest payments on the debt will be bigger than the defense budget.

So no one has a stake in this kind of permanent spending. But the question is, how are we going to do it? We know how important education is to our future. And we know that we have programs that give young kids a chance to get off to a better start in life, that make

for smaller classes and more computers and higher standards in our public schools; that give young people who don't go to 4-year schools the chance to get good training opportunities; that offer opportunities like AmeriCorps, to work and serve your community and earn money to go to college; that provide for more scholarships for poor children and provide for better loans at lower cost for other young people to go to school.

We know that if you raise the cost of a college education, you'll drive down the enrollment. Look at California: college enrollment down 10 percent in the last 2 years in the face of a bad economy. It should have been exploding in the face of a bad economy. So I say to you, it is a violation of our solemn obligation to give people the chance to make the most of their own lives, to have a budget in the name of balance that takes children off Head Start, raises the cost of going to college, abolishes AmeriCorps, and takes the American dream away from millions of Americans. It is wrong. It is a violation of our basic values.

It is not necessary to balance the budget. We have given a balanced budget plan that increases our investment in education. You heard the Vice President talking about the environment. Hillary and Chelsea and I spent a wonderful summer vacation in Grand Teton, in Yellowstone National Park. I want you to know one thing, that any family in America that can get in an automobile can go in that national park for 10 bucks a car. That's an incredible thing. It's a priceless wonder.

There are people who think we ought to close a bunch of the parks or we ought to have no restraint on whether you can have a diamond mine next door or who actually have the idea that it is oppressive for us to try to preserve clean air, clean water, and safe food; people who tried to stop us from implementing new regulations on food safety after all those people died from *E. coli*. And believe it or not, until we developed these new standards, when I became President, we were still inspecting meat the way dogs do. [Laughter] You laugh about it—we were looking at it, touching it, and smelling it. [Laughter] And we've finished with all that. We want to put in these new regulations. People are trying to stop us. It is funny, but you're really laughing to keep from crying. It's inconceivable that anybody would say, don't do that. Cryptosporidium killed all those people in

Milwaukee—do you remember that—polluting the water supply. We don't want it to happen to San Francisco. There were people who wanted to stop us from implementing them, who want to take away from the EPA the budget they need to enforce these things.

Now, we want to reduce Government regulation, but America needs clean air, clean water, safe food, and a devotion to our natural resources. That is a part of our moral obligation to our children and our future as well.

There are those who want us to take away our commitment to put 100,000 police on the street and just send a smaller check to local governments. We were in Jacksonville, Florida, the other day—a Republican county with an African-American Democratic sheriff. Why? Because out there where people live, crime and preventing it is a bipartisan issue. Out on the streets of America there's not much of a constituency for raising the crime rate. I'm having a hard time finding anybody for it. *[Laughter]* But back in Washington there are people who are perfectly prepared to do things that will lead to an increase in the crime rate in the name of a balanced budget. But it is not necessary.

If you look at the Medicare and the Medicaid issues, we have to slow the rate of growth in these entitlement programs. They're growing faster than the rate of inflation. We have to do something about that. Our budget does it. Their budget says, "In order to get a \$250 billion tax cut and a 7-year balanced budget, we'll just take \$450 billion out of the health care system over the next 7 years." Well, how did you arrive at that number? Was there a study done? "No. It's how much we have to take out to have the \$250 billion and a balanced budget in 7 years." Well, what about a little smaller tax cut and take another year or two to balance the budget? "No, no, no. The most important thing is 7 years and \$250 billion."

Well, what about our obligation to elderly people? Three-quarters of them are living on less than \$25,000 a year. How much can they pay in Medicare premiums? "It doesn't matter; we've got to do this." Well, what about the fact that inner city hospitals here in San Francisco can't operate without Medicaid funding for poor children or poor elderly people? What are all these folks with HIV going to do if—*[inaudible]*—not for Medicaid, trying to keep them alive in some dignity so they can continue to

work and be productive members of society but have some access to Medicaid? And then when they really get sick, how are they going to get the care they need without it? "It doesn't matter, we've got to have 7 years and a \$250 billion tax cut."

These are choices, folks. These are ethical choices. We can balance the budget in a credible way, in a short time. We can actually have a modest tax cut directed to childrearing and education and still fulfill our fundamental obligations to one another. But this is not fundamentally about money; it's about whether we're going to be a community or a crowd, whether we're going to have common ground or division.

I think I know where you stand. What I want to tell you is, I thank you for the contribution, but the contribution won't amount to much if we don't also have the contribution of your time, your effort, your passion, your willingness to engage your fellow citizens in saying that we have to have common ground, and we can have a balanced budget and we can have a good economy and we can have a good education system, we can have it all, but only if we proceed based on our rooted values that have taken America to this point in time. That's what I want you to do from now until November of 1996.

I want to close now with two brief points that I want you to think about. America has a lot of problems to face that require us to make difficult choices. And whether we make the right decision depends as much as anything else on our attitude and on whether we're willing to do the right thing for the long run. We have to find common ground. We need to reform the welfare system, but we need to do it because people on welfare will be better off if they can raise their children and get an education and be successful workers.

It's not a lot of the budget, but it's good for our values to do that. Therefore, when we reform welfare, we should do it in a way that lifts people up, not that divides people and tries to—*[inaudible]*—ethnic background. It's no longer necessary to make a conscious effort. I say to you, I'm against quotas. I'm against reverse discrimination. We've brought lawsuits against people for practicing reverse discrimination. But when Federal law enforcement officials who happen to be African-American get discriminated against in a restaurant that's part of a national chain, that is just one single example of the fact that we have not yet succeeded in

creating an environment in this country where there is no more discrimination. So let's keep making the efforts and fix the program without doing away with it. That's what I think we ought to do. I feel the same way.

Immigration—do we need to make some changes in immigration? Of course, we do. We have spent more money in California trying to stop illegal immigration and return illegal immigrants than any previous administration. Congresswoman Jordan—former Congresswoman Jordan from Texas, a very distinguished American—has made some strong recommendations on what the volume of immigration of the United States should have on an annual basis so that we can have a stable economy. But let's not forget one thing: Except for the Native Americans, all the rest of us came from somewhere else. We are a nation of immigrants. And we should be proud to be a nation of immigrants. Our gateway to the 21st century resides in the fact that we are the most diverse, successful big country in the world, and we need to keep it that way and remain committed to it.

The last point is this: I'll bet you anything that I have done at least one thing and probably a half dozen things that everybody in this room has disagreed with in the last 2½ years. And that's because a lot of our decisions that come to me are hard ones and because we are always pushing the envelope of possible change. But what I want you to know is that at least every day I am trying to do what I think is right. And I know that a lot of times it will not be good in the short run politically. There's hardly anybody that thought we were in our right mind when I sent our forces to Haiti to restore President Aristide and to remove the military dictators. But I would remind you that those people, those dictators, came to our country and promised on our ground in front of our Statue of Liberty that they would go and that democracy would be restored, that every country but one in all of Central and South America is—in the Caribbean—is a democracy. We had to do that. The United States—if people can't look to us to make sure people keep their word to us and to freedom, we would be in terrible shape. And it was the right thing to do.

I had all these people tell me that Hillary should not go to China. On both sides, they'd say, "Gosh, if she goes, it'll be like saying everything that happens over there in human rights is all right," and others who said, "If she goes

and she says what she ought to say, it will ruin our developing relationship with China." But I knew that she would be able to say what was in the heart of every American about what we believe ought to be the condition of women and young girls, not in China but in the United States, in India, in every other place in the world. And she did a great job. It was the right thing to do.

I had lots of people tell me—and they turned out to be right in the short run—that if we did what we ought to do and we passed the Brady bill and we passed the assault weapons ban and I became the first sitting President ever to publicly clash with and prevail against an organized effort by the National Rifle Association, that it would be a political disaster, because the people who disagreed with me about that would be against everybody who supported what I believed in. And the people who agreed with me would find some other reason to be against those people.

And I can tell you today that one of the reasons that my party lost the House of Representatives, perhaps the main reason, is that people in close race, after close race, after close race in rural areas were stampeded and scared into believing we were trying to take away their right to hunt and to own weapons and to protect themselves. It wasn't true, but they prevailed.

So they said, don't do it. But I kept thinking to myself, you know, sooner or later somebody's got to stand up and tell the truth. There are tens of thousands of people who could not get weapons since the Brady bill became law because of their criminal backgrounds. And if we can get a few more Uzis out of a few more high schools and off of a few more streets and stop a few more innocent kids from being shot down standing on the street corners, it is worth the consequences. We've got to stand up for what will be right 10 and 20 and 30 years from now. That's what I want to say to you. I want all of you to believe that.

The Vice President and I sat in meeting after meeting when they said, "Don't do this teenage smoking thing. Oh, everybody will tell you it's a great idea, but the tobacco companies will gut you. They will terrify all those tobacco farmers that are good, fine, honest people. They will convince them that you're trying to bankrupt them. They will mobilize people against you, and everybody in America that agrees with you will find some other reason not to be for

you. Don't do it. It's a terrible mistake." They would say, "There's got to be some reason no other President ever did this." Every other President always made a deal, made an agreement, did all this. But you know what? After 14 months of study, they came back and said two things. These people have known for 30 years that what they were doing was addictive and dangerous. They are marketing to children. They are trying to sell to children. And every day 3,000 children start smoking, and 1,000 of them will die early because of it. And it just seems to me that if we can give 1,000 more kids a day a chance at a full, good American way of life, it is worth whatever the near-term political consequences are.

That is how we all have to begin to think about our future. That's the way I want you

to think about our future. And I want you to go out of here just remembering with all of our difficulties, with all the problems California's been through, there's a reason we're still around here after 220 years nearly. This is a very great country. And when we remember our basic values and when we work together and when we look to the future, we always do all right.

So I just want you to remember that. You stay with us, stay with what you know is right, and the best is yet to come.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

Note: The President spoke at 12:27 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Fairmont Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon cochairs Richard Blum, Walter H. Shorenstein, Ernest Gallo, Chang Lo, and Susie Tompkins.

Interview With Larry King in Culver City, California

September 21, 1995

President's Trip

Mr. King. Thank you for joining us. This is a campaign trip or a Presidential trip?

The President. Well, a little of both.

Mr. King. Why so early?

The President. Because we have to get out now and raise our funds. And if I can do it in a regular, disciplined way, then I can maintain as much time as possible for my job even next year when the election begins.

Mr. King. Is it hard to run a country and run for office?

The President. It is if you have to do it full-time. And I just determined that the best thing to do would be to try to handle the fundraising in a regular way this year and try to get it out of the way so I could spend as much time as possible being President next year and defer the campaign as long as possible.

Mr. King. Oh, so next year the campaign is going to come late to you.

The President. Well, it depends what happens. But what I'd like to do is to work as much as I can. Even on this trip we've done several official things. This morning I was up in San Francisco with 19 executives of major information firms announcing that we were going to provide computer hookups for all the schools

in California over the next couple of years and challenging the rest of the country to follow the lead. And over the next few weeks, I'll be trying to put together a national plan for this sort of thing. We know we can get computers in all of the schools, and if we can get the teachers trained, have good software, we're going to do very well, indeed.

Mr. King. Was Bill Gates there?

The President. He was not, although I know him quite well, and I expect that he will be very supportive of this.

Mr. King. Because he said recently on a show we did on television that he would be very supportive.

Mr. President. Yes, he—I know him quite well, and we've talked about this extensively. But he couldn't come today. We had lots and lots of other people there. There's a great feeling that California ought to lead the way because the State is now only 45th in students—computers per student—but they have the—they're the technological leader of the world. So I'm encouraged by it. It's a very exciting thing.