

Remarks to the Community in Rochester February 17, 1996

Thank you very much. Thank you for waiting. Thank you. I can see that someone was up to a lot of mischief before I got here. [Laughter]

Let me say that I was all dressed up and ready to go at 7 sharp this morning, and they said I couldn't leave the White House until 8 because of the weather. And when I got to the airport, we sat there for another 2 hours. But I knew that I would wait for you if you would wait for me, and I thank you for being here. I'm glad to see you.

I want to thank the Rochester Middle School Rock and Jazz Band for playing and for playing "Hail to the Chief." Give them a hand there. [Applause] I want to thank the Spaulding High Red Raiders, the boys and the girls basketball teams, who gave up their practice yesterday to prepare this. Thank you very much. I thank my friend Jeanne Shaheen for her leadership here in New Hampshire and for that wonderful introduction and what she embodies. I want to thank George Stephanopoulos and my old friend David Matthews for warming the crowd up before I came. I want to say thank you to the mayor; your deputy mayor; your county attorney; my old friend George Maglaris, who was here earlier and I think said a few words; all the others who spoke before. I'd also like to acknowledge two friends of mine from 4 years ago who aren't here today, Mayor Roland Roberge and his wife, Lorraine. I miss them, and I know you remember them well here in Rochester.

I know someone before I came here mentioned it, but 4 years ago, I made 75 scheduled appearances and countless more unscheduled appearances in New Hampshire in just the last 6 weeks of the campaign, from New Year's Day forward. And not very far from here, at the Dover Elks Club, I gave what became a rather famous speech, because I said that I was trying to give the election for President back to the American people and back to the people of New Hampshire and that if you would give it to me, I would be there for you 'til the last dog dies.

I have come here today to give you an accounting of that pledge and to ask you to look to the future and to ask you to bring all this incredible enthusiasm with you into this election

year as citizens and to ask you, yes, to go out and vote in the primary on Tuesday for Bill Clinton for President of the United States.

I brought a straightforward vision to this job. I wanted to see the American dream available for all Americans, not just a few. I wanted to see our country continue to be the world's greatest force for peace and freedom. And I wanted to see our country coming together, not being divided for cheap, short-term political reasons. I said that I thought the only way we could achieve that is if all of us worked for more opportunity, all of us showed more personal responsibility, and all of us made a real commitment to build an American community.

Well, in the last 3 years, here's where we are—the good and the not so good. Look at the economy. We have the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in 27 years; almost 8 million new jobs; homeownership at a 15-year high. We're moving in the right direction.

The unemployment rate in New Hampshire is less than half of what it was on election day in 1992. And the commitments that I made to you helped that to occur. I said we would cut the deficit in half, and we did in 3 years. I said we would have 8 million more jobs, and in only 3 years we had 7.7 million more jobs. We're going to make that record and beat it by a good long ways this year. I said that we would expand trade in a fair way, and now, for the first time in years, our exports to other countries are growing faster than imports into America and creating good jobs for the United States of America.

I said that we would invest in new technologies, that we would expand educational opportunity, and that we would find a way to protect the environment and grow the economy. That's the only way you can do it in the long run, and that's exactly what we have done.

I asked you to give me a chance to try to give America a more secure future and a more peaceful, more democratic world. And the fact that there are no nuclear missiles pointed at any American children for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age is evidence of that commitment kept.

And I am proud of what the United States has done to stand up against terrorism, to limit the spread of dangerous weapons, to work for a ban on all nuclear testing, to stand up for peace in the Middle East and in Haiti and in Northern Ireland and in Bosnia today, where our brave soldiers are fighting for peace. I am proud of them.

And we are coming together around our basic values. In this country as a whole, the crime rate is down, the welfare rolls are down, the food stamp rolls are down, the poverty rate is down, the teen pregnancy rate is down. And I am proud of the work that we have done with our crime bill, with promoting welfare reform, with being tougher on child support enforcement, the kinds of things that we have done to support good family values, to bring people together, and to help our country work again. I am proud of that. And you should be proud that those things are going in the right direction.

But any full accounting, my fellow Americans, would require us to look at the full picture. Isn't it perplexing that we could have almost 8 million new jobs, that your unemployment rate could be cut by more than half, and that people could still feel economic insecurity? Why is that? Who would have believed we could have this many more jobs and more than half the American people would still be working harder without a raise? Who would believe we could generate this many more jobs and still the great companies of America would be downsizing—their stock price goes up, but their middle-aged middle managers trying to send their kids to school go off, and what happens to them?

Who would believe that we could bring the crime rate down, but that violence among juveniles would go up? Who would believe that drug use could go down, but that casual drug use and rampant illegal cigarette smoking among juveniles would go up? What explains this? How could things be so good on the one hand and still have these troubling elements?

Look at the rest of the world. Everybody ought to know that peace is better than war, that economic competition is better than terrorism. But here we are on the brink of a new peace in the Middle East and my friend, the Prime Minister, is murdered. Here we are on the brink of a new peace in Ireland and, foolishly, the peace is broken by a bomb. Here we are on the brink of making our people safer

than ever before, but we know that none of us are free from terrorism generated at home and abroad.

So we are moving in the right direction, but there are challenges we have to face. How did this happen? It is happening because I see now more clearly even than I did when I came here 4 years ago that we are going through a period of change more profound than anything the American people have experienced in 100 years. About 100 years ago, we moved from mostly being a people who lived in rural areas to mostly living in towns and cities. We moved from being people who mostly made their living on farms to being people who mostly made a living from factories and the economic opportunities that factories generated.

Today we are moving from people who mostly make a living based on information and technology. We are moving into a period where, no matter where people live, they operate all over the world because of technology and computers. We are moving in a period where we sell things, our goods, our services, and our money throughout the world.

And this great uprooting has created an enormous age of possibility for the American people. The young people in this audience will have an opportunity to do more things to live out their dreams than any generation of Americans ever has. But whenever things change this much, there is bound to be dislocation, uncertainty, people who worry about whether they will be a part of that future. And whenever that happens, it is our common responsibility as Americans to make sure, as I said 4 years ago, that everybody who will work for it has access to the American dream, that we do it together, and that we continue to be the great beacon of hope and freedom and peace that this country was meant to be. That is our mission, and we still have to fulfill it.

And in the State of the Union Address, I said that the most important lesson I have learned in 3 years as President is something I knew when I took office but something I now feel in my bones and the very fiber of my being, and that is, when we are together, we are never defeated, and when we are divided, we defeat ourselves. We have to go forward together. We have to work these issues through together. We have to seize these opportunities together. We have to face these challenges together.

That is what the balanced budget debate is all about. I hate these big deficits. We cut the deficit in half in 3 years. We do have to finish the job, but we have to do it together, which means we have to honor our responsibilities to our parents and to our children through Medicare and Medicaid, to the future through investments in education and the environment. We have to remember that all among us deserve a chance at the present and all among us deserve to have our children have the kind of future they deserve. That is how we must balance the budget.

And let me just say that I told you here in this county 4 years ago that I did not believe that Government had the answer to all the problems, that I was not a Democrat who favored big Government bureaucracies. Look at the record. The United States Government is 205,000 employees smaller today than it was the day I took the oath of office. It's the smallest it's been in 30 years. At the end of this year, it will be the smallest it's been since John Kennedy was the President of the United States of America.

We are getting rid of unneeded regulations and unneeded programs and unneeded bureaucracies. But just because we don't need a big Government doesn't mean we need a weak one. Just because we don't need a big Government to solve all of our problems doesn't mean we can go back to the time when Americans were left to fend for themselves, when people were told, "You're on your own." We have to do this together.

And if you look at the challenges we faced in moving to the 21st century and meeting our mission of guaranteeing the American dream for all and maintaining our leadership and bringing the American people together, you can see it. What are those challenges?

One, we have to strengthen our families and give all children a childhood. Yes, it begins with parents. But it also includes things like having the American National Government help as we did last week when the telecommunications bill gave parents the V-chip so they can decide whether their children should see this mindless violence on television.

We have to make sure we educate everyone for the 21st century. Yes, it begins with parents and teachers and local schools. But we need a national effort to see that all of our classrooms and all of our libraries are hooked up to the

information superhighway by the year 2000. And we need—it is in the Nation's interest to see that every child who wants to go on to college can do it with a scholarship, with a loan, and, I believe, with a tax deduction for college tuition for the parents.

We have to see—we cannot ask parents to wait for their children to achieve economic security. If people are out there working hard, they deserve to be able to raise their children and have a stable, secure life. And yes, it begins with people's willingness to work and to learn and to acquire new skills, but it is legitimate for the Government to say, "We're going to give all working families access to health care." And there is a bill that would prevent—[*applause*]*—*there is a bill before the Congress today, before the Senate, that would say insurance companies can't cut you off when you change jobs, insurance companies can't cut you off if someone in your family gets sick. That's what insurance is for.

It is a simple bill. It has 45 Democratic and Republican cosponsors. It's been voted out of the committee unanimously. But because the insurance lobby is holding it up, we cannot bring it to a floor vote. It is out of the committee. It will pass. It should pass the Senate. It should pass the House. It is an American bill. It's in America's interest. We ought to do it for the people of the United States.

Yes, people have to take care of themselves, but we ought not to let our Government once again go back to the time when companies could raid their workers' pension funds. Instead, it should be easier for small businesses to take out pensions for their employees and for themselves.

Yes, people ought to have to get retraining if they need it, but we ought to make it easier. I have asked the Congress to get rid of dozens and dozens of these training programs and create a pool—to create a "GI bill" for America's workers, just give a simple training voucher to anybody who loses their job and let them decide where to spend it and how to spend it at the nearest and best educational institution.

We have to continue the fight against crime. Even though the crime rate is going down, you know it's too high. It is still too high. When will we know we have won that fight? When you turn on the television news and you see a report of a crime and you're surprised. That's when we know. When you're surprised. When

once again it is the exception rather than the rule. When people do not feel afraid on their streets or for their children in their schoolyards. We have to continue that.

That means we cannot—we cannot—reverse our commitment to put 100,000 more police officers on the street. It means we should not walk back on any of our anticrime initiatives. But let me say this in New Hampshire. I know it wasn't popular here when I signed the Brady bill and when I signed the assault weapons ban. And I know what the hunters were told. But let me say this, let me say this, in my home State we just had a great duck season. And in New Hampshire you just had a great deer season. And I'll bet you anything every hunter that wanted to shot deer in New Hampshire and ducks in Arkansas with the same gun they had last year. They did not tell you the truth. I'll tell you who doesn't have guns: 41,000 criminals who couldn't get them because we passed the Brady bill.

Let me say this. For a very long time in America our commitment to the environment was a common bipartisan commitment. It has only recently become partisan. My fellow Americans, we must make it bipartisan again by the vote and the voice of the American people in this election. We cannot afford the illusion of believing that the only way we can grow this economy is to destroy our natural resources and undermine our future. All the evidence we have indicates that that is a fool's choice that we will pay for dearly. And we have evidence that is overwhelming that we can create good new jobs by having the right kind of environmental protection. I will not weaken our commitment to preserve and protect the environment of this country.

Nor will I walk away from the responsibilities of this country in the world of today and tomorrow to lead for peace and freedom. No one else can do this. We have to do the right thing, and the right thing makes us more secure. We can be hit by terrorists from anywhere. It is the right thing to stand up against terrorism everywhere. We have to stand for the things we believe in.

And finally, let me say this. We have got to make democracy work. And all these other challenges—you say it starts with the citizens and ends with the Government. In this case it starts with the Government and ends with the citizen. I have worked hard. We have passed

tough new lobbying laws, as I pledged we would in '92. We have eliminated the tax deduction for lobbying in Washington, as I promised we would in 1992. We have applied to Congress the laws they impose on the private sector, as I said I would try to do in 1992.

There are two more things we have to do. The Congress should give me the line item veto they have been promising. And we should join hands, as the Speaker and I did when we shook hands in Claremont not very long ago, and finally pass a bipartisan campaign finance reform bill to give elections back to the people of New Hampshire and the people of the United States of America.

But it ends with you. It ends with you. There is no call—they say a politician is never supposed to disagree with the majority at election time, but I'm going to tell you something: There is no call for the cynicism, for the negativism, for the apathy that so many express today.

Yes, it is true that we have not solved all the problems in the last 3 years, but what I said was—in Dover 4 years ago—that the Presidency is the most important hiring decision the American people ever make. If you vote for me, I won't solve all the problems, I won't give you a miracle, but I will give you movement. You won't have to worry about whether I'm working every day, caring about you every day, or making progress.

My fellow Americans, by any standard, we have made progress. But most important is what will we do tomorrow, what is your vision of the future, and are you willing to do something about it? Cynicism is a very cheap excuse for inaction, and it is ultimately frustrating and unrewarding. It guarantees the failure of democracy.

So I ask you again to participate in democracy. They say, "Well, there is no opponent in the primary." Oh, yes, there is. Cynicism is our opponent. Apathy is our opponent. Division is our opponent. The siren song of simple answers that are wrong is our opponent. And you should know that, whatever anybody says, this is still the greatest country in human history. Most people would give anything to be in your shoes around the world today. And this system will work if you will make it work. This system will work if you will make it work.

All my life I have been driven by the conviction that it is simply wrong, it is wrong when any person is deprived of the opportunity to

live up to the fullest of their God-given potential. I now know more strongly than I ever had that it is also wrong to believe for a moment that we can ever become all we ought to be unless we do it together.

And so I say to you, I have tried to be there for you. I have loved the opportunity to be your President. I am grateful beyond words for the chance you gave me in New Hampshire when everybody who was an expert said it was over. I am grateful. But I do not want you to reelect me based on what we have done, or even based on your personal feelings. I want

you to do it because the only way you and your children and your community and your State and your country are going to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow is if we do it together, together 'til the last dog dies.

God bless you, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the gymnasium at Rochester Community Center. In his remarks, he referred to Harvey E. Bernier, Jr., mayor, and Sandra Keanes, deputy mayor; Lincoln Soldati, county attorney, and George Maglaris, county commissioner, Strafford County.

Remarks to the Community in Keene, New Hampshire February 17, 1996

Thank you. Thank you for waiting in the cold. I waited on the runway for 2 hours this morning in Washington for the weather to clear so that I could come, and I was hoping you would wait for me.

Mayor Russell, thank you for those wonderful remarks about your beloved city. Senator Blaisdell, thank you for your support and your statement and your service. And Jennifer Durling, thank you for reminding us all what this election is all about: you and people like you, your future, and your country's future. Thank you for doing such a good job. Let's give her another hand. *[Applause]*

I am delighted to be back in Keene. I thank the high school band and the choir for doing so well today. I was in the band in high school; I can tell you they are freezing to death over there. *[Laughter]* It's not easy to play the national anthem on a warm day, and they did it on a cold day. Let's give them another hand; they were great. *[Applause]*

You know, I know the movie "Jumanji" was filmed here. And I know one of the biggest scenes was an elephant stampede right up this street. And I decided I'd better get up here before it's too late and we had another elephant stampede. *[Laughter]*

I have such wonderful memories of this community. I was last here in 1994 at the Markem Company, but all of you know I came many times in 1992. And the first time I had an inkling that we might actually go on to victory

was the night I had one of my town meetings in Keene, before they were the thing to do. And we rented a hall, or got one, anyway, that was supposed to be big enough for 150 people, and everybody was hoping we'd make the room look almost full. And over 400 people showed up that night. Some of you were there, and I thank you. You gave me heart then to go on, and I thank you for being here now.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to the people of Keene for being so good to Hillary when she was here recently at her rally. On my desk at the White House I've got one of those buttons that says "I'm Keene on Hillary." And since I am, it's only appropriate for me to have it there.

My fellow Americans, you all know that New Hampshire gave me the chance to become President of the United States. And even more important, in all the many visits I had here in 1992—and I just counted before I came up—there were 75 separate scheduled events in New Hampshire between January 1st and election day in 1992. You taught me a lot about America, about America's dreams and challenges, America's hopes, and America's concerns. And because you did in this town square, in those rooms, and the town meetings, you helped me to do my job better. So before I say anything else, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the opportunity I've had these last 3 years to work for you. I thank you.