

Remarks at Glendale Community College in Glendale, California
June 11, 1996

Thank you so much. Thank you very, very much. President Davitt, thank you very much for welcoming me here and for your kind remarks. And thank you, Hazel Ramos, not only for the fine statement you made but for the power of your example. If you represent the future, I think the future is in good hands, indeed. I thought you did a very good job. Thank you.

I want to thank your mayor, Calvin Baker, and the others who came out to welcome me today, to make me feel so at home. And I want to thank all of you for coming out on this beautiful day in this beautiful community. I told President Davitt, you know, that it is true that I visit a lot of community colleges. I believe in the community college. I believe that as I look at all of you, from all different backgrounds, all walks of life, average age about probably 27—the student body—I see the future of America at its best.

And I believe that the country we have to create in the 21st century has to work more like the community colleges. It has to be less political and more personal and more human. We have to be very flexible and willing to change and move with the markets, but also be committed to the development of every single individual. And that's basically what the community colleges do. And I hope in these next few months in this election season, as we discuss the future of our country, we'll be able to do it in a civil and open and honest way that reflects the kind of strength and roots in America that we all share, as well as the honest differences of opinion we all have. And I see that in the community colleges, and I sense that here at Glendale here today. So I thank all of you for being here and for representing that for our country.

I'd also like to say, on a more personal note—and in keeping with the comments I just made—I realize that Washington is a long way away, and it's easy for all of us to become alienated from it. And I know we live in a time when it is fashionable to criticize public service and long tenure in public service. But even though I am about to begin a rather vigorous campaign with Senator Dole, I would like to

ask all of you, including those of you who are my supporters, to just take a moment and wish him well. This is his last day in the Senate. He has given over 30 years of his life to serving our country in the United States Congress, and I think we ought to give him a hand today. [Applause]

You know, this school has been a center of learning for nearly 70 years. I learned, in preparing to come here, that when the earthquake occurred here in 1933—not 1993—the students here were so dedicated to their education that they actually met in tents after the earthquake. Over the years, the student body has changed here. Many of you were born in other countries, including the young woman who just introduced me. But what has remained unchanged is that this community college is a place where students can get the knowledge and skills they need to help to realize their dreams.

And now the community college movement indeed is sweeping the United States. There are more than a hundred community colleges in California alone. And enrollment is exploding everywhere, because community colleges fill a need to strengthen the communities, to strengthen people's individual dreams, and to help them build successful families. There are so many examples of that here, in your professional development center, in the work you do to provide low-cost babysitting services for people who have to be students and parents and workers at the same time.

I want to say a special word of thanks to Glendale for the Volunteer and Service Learning Center that AmeriCorps, our national service program, has helped to fund. I thank you for that.

When I became President and California's economy and the American economy was under such distress and there was so much division and rancor in our country, one of the things that—

[At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.]

You know, we have now—wait a minute, wait, wait, wait. We have now observed her free speech rights; it will be interesting to see if she will observe ours, won't it? [Applause]

Thank you. Thank you. Wait, wait, wait, wait. Folks, you cannot blame this poor woman. They have nothing to run on. We have a good record, so they have to try these kind of radical, crazy attacks. She can't help it. It's just like when you take a cookie away from the kid and they're mad about it. You know, they can't help it. [Laughter] Just be patient. Some people think they own the public institutions of this country and they have a right to terrify you to get them back. They don't. Just relax. We'll have a good time and talk about the real issues. Thank you.

Now, where was I? [Laughter]

When I ran for this job, what concerned me most was that this was a country of enormous strength. I mean, look around here. You would be here; you're doing this. You would be here regardless of who's President or what was happening. That's not quite true when it comes to student aid, but I'll get back to that. But we did not seem to have any sense of how we were going to deal with all these challenges as we moved into the 21st century.

The world is changing very dramatically. Now the difference in the world today and when I was the age of those of you who are in this community college is breathtaking. I mean, we have moved from a world dominated by the cold war and big blocs into a global economy. We have moved from an economy dominated by heavy industry into one dominated by information and technology in every form of human endeavor, whether it's industry or agriculture or the services. We have moved into a world where knowledge, which has always been a key to individual opportunity, is now the key to the success of the whole society and is literally the dividing line between those who can continue to do well for a lifetime and those who risk being left behind.

Now the question we face is, how are we going to meet these challenges of the 21st century and preserve the values which have made it possible for America to be the world's greatest multiracial, multiethnic democracy in human history? How are we going to do both?

I strongly believe that the mission of this country must be to offer every American citizen an opportunity and demand that every American take responsibility—that that is the basic bargain. And that's the bargain you signed onto at this community college. I think if we do that, we can create a strong America that's based

on strong communities and rooted in strong families.

Today I want to talk just a moment to all of you because people in community colleges are on average just a little older than the typical undergraduates that go right from high school into college, about how success for individual Americans relates to success for American families, because we cannot succeed in this country unless we work together in communities across the lines that divide us. And the ability to work together begins with the ability to build strong families.

When I gave the State of the Union Address, that's the first challenge that I attempted to deal with. Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago said once that families are the smallest democracies across the heart of society. I believe that that is clearly true. And one of the things that concerns me most about the world we live in today is that, contrary to what a lot of people think, we don't have more lazy people in America. The average American is working a longer work-week today than he or she was 25 years ago. People are working hard out there. And there are a lot of people in this community college today who are very busy every week. They're working as students, they're working at jobs, and they're working with their children. That is hard, hard work.

And it seems to me that one way to think about how we're all going to live '5, 10, 20 years from now in this exciting global economy, with all the opportunities that are open to you, one way to think about it is to think about how we can create a country in which people can succeed at work and at home. How can you be successful in your job or in a series of jobs over a lifetime and be successful in building a family? How can you do well raising children as well as going to work every day and, if necessary, going back to school over and over again for a lifetime?

And if you think about it, any great society that forces people to make a choice in the end is going to fail. If you have to fail at home in order to succeed at work, we're in trouble. But if the only way you can succeed at home is to fail at work, we're in trouble. So when I think about the kind of world we're trying to create, I often ask myself, how can I create an America so that when I leave office every American who is willing to work for it can get up every day and do well at home and do well

at work and do well at school? That is what I want.

The first thing we have to do, obviously, is to give people economic opportunity. I'm proud of the fact that in the last 3½ years we've cut the deficit by more than 50 percent. It's wrong to leave you with a legacy of debt. We've got interest rates down so we can grow the economy. I'm proud of the fact that we are now seeing an all-time record in the products and services we're exporting, more than ever before, to the Asian-Pacific region here out of the West Coast. I'm proud of the fact that in each of the last 3 years we've had a record number of new small businesses and that there have been 3.7 million more Americans move into their own homes in the last 3½ years. I am very proud of that.

And I'm proud of the fact that when we passed our economic program by one vote in both Houses—the Vice President had to break the tie—and some of the people who were against it said it would bring on a recession and crash the economy. We said it would bring 8 million jobs in 4 years. Well, they were wrong, but so were we. It brought 9.7 million jobs in 3½ years and 600,000 of them in California and a lot more to come, after 4 years of losing jobs. And so we're moving in the right direction.

But it's not enough. We also have to think about, what about all those working people? How are they going to succeed at home? We passed the family and medical leave law to say that if you have to take a little time off, you won't lose your job because your child is sick. And I think that's important. We strengthened child support enforcement—40 percent increase in 3 years in child support enforcement. We worked with States all over America to help people who were on welfare move into school, move into work. There are 1.3 million fewer families on welfare today than there were the day I became President, and I'm proud of that. We have worked hard to reduce the welfare rolls.

We also recognize what you recognize every day when you come to this community college, that we simply cannot create the kind of America we're working for until every single American has access to a higher level of education. And we cannot allow this country to become a more divided society. One of the most disturbing things that has happened in America in the last 15 years is that after spending almost

40 years after World War II in which we were growing together—in which the poorest Americans who were working were increasing their incomes at roughly the same rate as the wealthiest of Americans—for the last 15 years we have become a more divided society, and about half of our people are working harder and harder without getting raises. Almost entirely, the division is due to the lack of skills that are marketable in the global economy.

This community college and community colleges like it all around American can turn that around. That's why I said it is time to guarantee every single American not 12 but 14 years of education. We should guarantee it for every American. The specific proposal that President Davitt referred to that I made at Princeton the other day is that we do two things to increase college education availability.

Let me back up and say, what we have done for the last 3 years is to try to give more options to young people on college loans, to cut the cost, cut the hassle, and give people easier terms to repay, including letting people pay their loans back as a percentage of their income, so that people that don't make a lot of money when they get out of school won't be bankrupt by the repayment. And I think that's important. We have tried to increase the Pell grant program every year. It is impossible to overstate how important the Pell grant program is to a lot of people from working families who need it for education purposes. But I have proposed two more things.

Number one, for students at 2-year, 4-year colleges, any post-high school education, I think we should give people a tax deduction for the cost of tuition of up to \$10,000 a year, all the way. However, if—when we studied this for a year—we were out there advocating this for a year, it occurred to me that that would not necessarily do students a great deal of good if they were in community colleges where the tuition was, let's say, \$500, \$600 a year. The average in America is \$1200. It's less than that in California still, thank goodness. But if you were in a situation where the tuition was that amount, and your tax rate was, let's say, 15 percent, which is what most of American taxpayers are, then the tax deduction doesn't do you very much good. Which is why we said, if we wanted to guarantee access to education to everybody for 2 years after high school, we should give a tax credit, an actual credit up to \$1,500 a

year for the first year, refundable for the second year if you maintain a B average or better, so everybody can have access to 2 years of community college everywhere. And I think that is very important. Again I say that if we do this, this will make it possible for people to succeed at home and at work.

We need some help in other areas. I have challenged the corporations of America to be more family friendly. We had a wonderful meeting in Washington a few weeks ago in which we asked a couple of hundred corporate executives and members of labor organizations and others, what do you think our obligations are to each other as we move into the 21st century? How can we help people succeed at home and at work? I urged businesses to give people more time off so that kids could go to teacher conferences at school, to experiment with flex times, to open satellite offices to reduce commuting, which is a huge problem out here, to help workers with computers and faxes if they can do more work at home—just to do things to try to figure out how to merge work and family as we move into the future.

All of this is very important for its own sake, but it's especially important if you think about all the problems and challenges our children are facing today. When I leave you, I'm going to Albuquerque to talk about some things that I tried to do to help people raise their children more safely. Albuquerque, like Long Beach, California, has adopted a school uniform program. And that's reducing violence and increasing learning, an important discipline in a lot of schools. There will be people there from Las Cruces, New Mexico, which, like New Orleans and a lot of other cities, has adopted a curfew policy which has dramatically reduced violence and crime among juveniles and helped parents to support their children. These are the kinds of things that I think we have to be alert to.

I also think there's some more things that Washington has to do. This was not very popular when I started it, and it's still unpopular in some places—when we became the first administration ever to ask the tobacco industry to undergo regulation in terms of the advertising targeted at children. But you need to know that it is illegal in every State in America for children under the age of 18 to smoke. Every day—every single day—3,000 kids start smoking, and 1,000 of them will die sooner because of cancer, emphysema, heart disease or some other smok-

ing-related problem. That is a stunning thing. That's the biggest single health problem in America. So I believe we have to keep working on it.

Now, California, way back in 1988, passed something called Proposition 99, which emphasized educating children about the danger of tobacco. I hope you will stay in the forefront of that, and I hope you will support me. We should not be spending hundreds of millions—maybe billions—of dollars a year to advertise to children to do something that's illegal, that's going to take a third of them out of this life sooner than they ought to leave. It is wrong. It is not right.

One other thing I want to mention that I think affects a lot of parents who are particularly busy is that more and more of our children are spending more and more of their time in front of the television instead of with their parents or in other places. Now, I've worked hard with the entertainment industry, and I want to compliment them for agreeing to develop a system of voluntary ratings for television programs to help parents in dealing with the exposure that their young children might have to programs with excessive violence or other improper content. And the entertainment industry, much of which is here in California, deserves a lot of credit for doing this. They did it entirely voluntarily. We got the Congress to pass something called the V-chip, which will go into television sets which will enable parents to control that. And I think that's a positive thing.

But there's one other issue that I want to mention, which is that I have been trying now, for some time, to get a few hours a week—keep in mind, kids watch about 4 hours a day of television on average—I've been trying to get the Federal Communications Commission for a year to just say that 3 hours a week ought to be devoted to children's educational programming by every network in the country. I believe that. I think it would be a good thing.

And today I want to formally reissue an invitation to the people from the entertainment industry involved in television to come back to the White House before the end of July to discuss that. If we can control, by ratings, give parents the power to deal with what their children are watching on television, surely—surely—we can agree to increase the content of children's television that goes to education. If you're here in school, going to community college for 4

hours a day, and your kids are back home watching television, it wouldn't hurt to have at least 3 hours a week devoted to their education while you're here pursuing yours. And I think that is something that we ought to watch and work for.

Well, let me say again, I view these things together. And when I leave here today, I hope you will all have a conversation about the things that I mentioned. I hope you will talk among yourselves and with your family and friends who aren't here about these great questions. This is an incredible time we are moving into. Those of you who are students here will have more opportunities to live out your dreams than any generation of Americans before you. Some of you who are students here, within 10 years, will be working at jobs that have not even been invented yet, that we cannot even imagine.

The best days of this country are still ahead of us if we can figure out how to make opportunity available to every person who will exercise the responsibility to seize it and if we can figure

out how to come together, with all of our diversity. If we can respect each other and share the basic values of America, we're going to do fine. You are going to have a great, great future. But we have to be willing to have an honest discussion about this: How do you create opportunity for everybody? How can people succeed at home and at work? How can you build strong families and a strong community? That's the way to a strong America. It all starts here with your education and with making sure that every single, solitary American who is willing to work for an education has a chance to get it, not just when they're young but for an entire lifetime. We can do it together.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. in the courtyard at the college. In his remarks, he referred to John Davitt, president, and Hazel Ramos, student, Glendale Community College; Mayor Sheldon Baker of Glendale, CA; and Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago.

Remarks at Grover Cleveland Middle School in Albuquerque, New Mexico *June 11, 1996*

Thank you so much. Thank you. Let me say, first of all, Tomas did a terrific job. Let's give him another hand. I thought he was wonderful. [Applause] Let me also say I am delighted to be back in New Mexico and delighted to be here to celebrate the commitment of your people across party lines, ethnic lines, and income lines to secure the future of the children of this State, and I thank you for that.

I thank our principal here, Mary Lou Anderson, for welcoming me at Grover Cleveland. I thank Superintendent Gonzalez for what he said about Las Cruces, and I'll say more about that in a minute. I thank Mayor Chavez for doing a wonderful job as your mayor and for all the things that he talked about here. I thank Senator Bingaman and Congressman Schiff for being here with me. I thank Governor and Mrs. Johnson and the leaders of the legislature and former Governor and Mrs. King.

I want to thank the law enforcement officials who are here; I want to say a little more about them in a moment. And I see some leaders

in the Native American community from New Mexico here; I thank them for coming. I'm glad to see all of you here as one people today.

You know, as I have said many times to the American people, I believe that the best days of this country are ahead of us. I believe we are moving into a period of possibility for people all across this country to live out their dreams, unlike anything we have ever known. But we have to find a way to meet the challenges of this new era and to preserve the basic values that made America great.

Now, there are some things that we can do in Washington and a lot of things that you have to do out here. If you think about what you want your children's future to be like, what you want your grandchildren's future to be like, you have to think of these programs and these efforts that were discussed today. You have to think you want every child to have the same chances that young Mr. Sanchez talked about today.