

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.

Now, when I think about that, I think, well—and I've given this a great deal of thought; indeed, I think of little else as President. I want everybody to have a chance to have gainful work. I want all people to have a chance to get a good education. I want the American people to be able to raise their children on safe streets in safe neighborhoods. And those things we can make a contribution to.

When we invest, for example, in your laboratories here in New Mexico as they move from the cold war to the new global economy to try to preserve new technologies, to create new high-wage jobs, that's a way of creating a new economy. When we cut the deficit by more than 50 percent and get interest rates down and expand exports so that our economy produces 9.7 million new jobs in 3½ years, those things help to create a structure of opportunity for children in the future. And that's very, very important.

If you look at education, we have tried to expand educational opportunities, everything from providing more funds for more kids to be in Head Start programs to helping States to set higher standards for their schools, to a commitment to connect every single classroom and library in every school in America to the Internet by the year 2000, which will help all the children here, to giving every family in this country on a modest income a deduction for the cost of college education and a tax credit for the first 2 years of community college after high school. These things are important.

But safety is also important. Let me tell you what plagues me. In this country in the last 3½ years, the crime rate is down, but violence among young people under 18 is up. That is a very troubling thing. You heard this fine student talk about the gang problem. Let me tell you, the young people who are coming into our schools today are coming in in record numbers. There will soon be classes in the elementary schools of America that are larger in numbers than any of the classes of the baby boom years. And if we don't do something to turn this problem of gang violence and youth violence around, it can threaten to wreck all the progress we have made together in strengthening the economy and expanding educational opportunity and helping America to grow and go forward together.

We cannot create opportunity in this country unless the American people are willing to take responsibility for giving our children safe child-

hoods and a safe future. And you are doing that in New Mexico. That's why I came here today.

You heard the mayor talk about some of the things the National Government can do: more police officers, the Brady bill, the other initiatives. They're important. But it's also important to try to help local communities seize control of their destiny. I don't know how many times I've heard my daughter's friends tell Hillary or me how they'll never forget the D.A.R.E. officer that came to them when they were in grade school to talk to them about the importance of staying away from drugs and living a drug-free life. I don't know how many schoolteachers I've had come up to me and talk to me about the importance of the safe and drug-free schools program and the zero tolerance for guns and violence that we're trying to enforce all across America. If kids cannot be safe in school so they can learn and feel secure, where can they be safe? These things are all important.

But the most important thing perhaps we can do here is to do what I'm trying to do today, and that's to find ways to support you in taking local initiatives. And again, I say that this is something that ought to transcend politics. When I heard the mayor up here talking about the middle school cluster initiative, when I heard your principal, when I heard young Tomas talking about the program that he lauded and he thanked all the people who were involved in it, I realized that that is really the magic of what we have to do. Somehow all these kids that we're losing have to know that someone cares about them, have to know that there are not only things they have to say no to in life but things that they can say yes to, have to realize that they can have a future. Even if they come from difficult family backgrounds, even if they live on tough streets, even if they live in a tough neighborhood, they have to know that there's something they can say yes to.

The community curfew program you have instituted here, I know it's controversial when you start it. I know a lot of young people think, "Well, why should I go in?" But I can tell you, I have been in communities that have had these curfews for a couple of years. Crime goes down. Kids are safer on the street; they're better off at home 99 times out of 100. And after they've been there a couple of years they become popular with young people, as well as

with the parents, because everybody wants a safer community to live in and a better and brighter future in which to live it.

And so I want to applaud you for doing that. And let me say that I heard some of you expressing your reservations when Superintendent Gonzalez talked about the school uniform program in Las Cruces. But let me tell you, no one says that you should do it. What we say is that you should have the right to do it.

But let me tell you a story about the biggest school district in the country to adopt a school uniform policy, Long Beach, California. It's the third biggest school district in California. Now, their problems are not the problems of every school district in America, but they had some terrible problems. They had kids that had to walk to school through neighborhoods that were infested by gangs, and they had to wonder every day whether the clothes they had on were going to get them rolled, either because the jackets or the shoes were too nice or inadvertently they'd worn the wrong colors. They had to really worry about that. They had to worry about people coming on the school grounds during recess, during lunchtime and rolling the students and not even being identified as non-students until it was too late.

And so they permitted every school to make up their own mind about what kind of uniform they were going to have. They let the students design what they would wear and pick the colors. And it just had to be inexpensive enough for everybody to afford. And then they raised a little money for the people whose families were too poor to afford the uniforms. So that the uniforms, since they weren't the same for the whole district, they were different for every school. Sometimes the teachers wore them, too, and sometimes they didn't. It was all about the school's identity. It was almost like being on one big team, being in one good gang.

And guess what? The crime rate went down; the violence went down; attendance went up; school learning went up. And even upper income students said, "This is a better deal," because they were no longer identified by what they wore but by what kind of people they were, what kind of values they had and what kind of—[inaudible]—they had.

So I say to you, we don't say that you should do this. We say if you have a problem with young people and gangs, it's one thing you should consider. And you sure ought to be free

to do it, free of any worries about lawsuits or hassles if you decide to do it.

There are all kinds of other things that schools are doing. A lot of schools are doing more work in character education, and we've tried to help schools deal with that. There are all kinds of initiatives that will work only if people at the local level believe it. So I say to you, I came here today to say I want America to look at New Mexico and say, "Well, maybe we should consider a curfew policy. Maybe we ought to consider a middle school initiative like the one they have in Albuquerque. Maybe we ought to consider a uniform policy like the one they have in Las Cruces."

I'm dry—I can't do this today—[laughter].

And some of the times, the best thing the Government can do in Washington is just to help you do this. The only thing we have done on all these issues is to make sure that the Justice Department and the Department of Education can give every school district in America guidance if they want to do these things, so there are no legal problems, no legal hassles, and people are free to put our children first and their future first.

So I say to all of you, again, I thank the people of New Mexico for being here today. I thank the political leaders for being here today. Two members of your congressional delegation called me before I came because they couldn't come, Senator Domenici and my good friend Congressman Bill Richardson, and I thank them for calling expressing their support for these endeavors.

This is something we have to do together. And when you go home tonight, if you have any friends in other States or other communities in New Mexico, the next time they get in touch with you, I want you to talk to them about this, because we don't have any more important responsibility than to give every child in this country, no matter where they are, where they grow up, how tough their circumstances are, the opportunity to live out their dreams.

We are going to be able to construct an economy that will permit them to live out their dreams. We know—we know that we can expand educational opportunity so that every single child who's willing to work for it will have access to go beyond high school to 2 years of community college and on to college if they want to do it—every child. We know we can do that. But we will never, ever seize the prom-

ise of the 21st century in New Mexico or anywhere else in the United States until every child can live in a safe neighborhood and go to a safe school and belong to good, positive, constructive groups that reinforce the kind of values and the kind of imagination and the kind of character that our young speaker who introduced me evidenced today.

That is a dream that you have to pursue and that every American family, every American community, and every American school has to pursue child by child by child. We'll do what we can to support you, but you need to do

what you can to make sure every person you know is committed to that goal.

Thank you, and God bless you. And I hope you get rain tonight. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:08 p.m. in the auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Tomas Sanchez, Grover Cleveland Middle School student who introduced the President; Jesse Gonzalez, superintendent, Las Cruces Public Schools; Mayor Martin Chavez of Albuquerque, NM; Gov. Gary E. Johnson of New Mexico and his wife, Dee; and Bruce King, former New Mexico Governor, and his wife, Alice.

Remarks at the Dedication of Mount Zion A.M.E. Church in Greeleyville, South Carolina

June 12, 1996

Thank you very much, Bishop and Reverend Mackey. Let me begin by thanking you all for being here and making us all feel so welcome. And before I—and thank you for that—[*laughter*—before I go into my remarks, I want to present the Reverend Mackey a little plaque I brought that is dedicated to the congregation of this church, Mount Zion A.M.E. It says, “We must come together as one America to rebuild our churches, restore hope, and show the forces of hatred they cannot win.” I hope you will put this up in your church, Reverend Mackey, and remember this day always. I’m honored to be here with you.

You know, first of all, let me say I’m honored to be here with so many distinguished Americans. I thank Senator Hollings and Congressman Clyburn for coming down here with me today. I thank Congressman Inglis for being here. And our good friend John Conyers, from Michigan, is either here or on his way here—Congressman Conyers, I thank him. I want to thank all the dignitaries who have come to join us: Reverend Jesse Jackson for coming back home to South Carolina, and thank you for being here. And I want to thank Reverend Joseph Lowery, the very first person who wrote me to say that our National Government needed to do more about these church burnings. Thank you, Reverend Lowery, for doing that. And I thank my old friend Bishop James for coming back here, and

Reverend Joan Campbell, Mayor Riley, Mayor Coble, Mayor Kellahan, and others who are here.

And of course, I want to thank the mayor of Greeleyville, who met me at the airport and rode in with me and talked to me about this little community and its challenges and its promise. I thank the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury for coming down with me here today to demonstrate just how important we think it is to get to the bottom of these church burnings, and all of us are going to be working together on that. I thank my good friend Millard Fuller, from Habitat for Humanity, for being here; and Randall Osborne, the SCLC administrator. Reverend Mac Jones, the NCCC; Reverend Ed Johnson; R.A. Leonard; Reverend Patricia Lowman.

And I’d like to make a special recognition and ask him to raise his hand, the Reverend Larry Hill, of the Matthews Murkland Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, which burned just last week. Reverend Hill, would you raise your hand? Where are you, sir? Here he is. Let’s give him a hand. [*Applause*] Good to see you again, sir. Thank you.

First of all, I think it’s important to note that we’re celebrating a little something today. When the pastor came here, he told me this church had 42 members, and now it has 200 members. This church is like Shadrach,