

Remarks in Pontiac, Michigan August 27, 1996

The President. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. First of all, let me say it is wonderful to be in Pontiac. I am sorry that it's been since Harry Truman came here in 1948 since a President has been here. But I'm glad to be following in Harry Truman's footsteps with you today. [Applause] Thank you.

Let me begin by saying a thank you to Jay and to Jenna for their work in AmeriCorps, for the example they set for our young people, and for their proof that our young people still care about others and want our country to be a stronger, better, brighter place.

Thank you, Mayor Moore, for your enthusiastic welcome and for your leadership. I want to thank all the community leaders, all the school leaders, all the ministers, all the other folks from Pontiac who are here who've made us feel so welcome. Thank you, my good friend Rosa Parks, for being here with us and for inspiring so many people.

Thank you, Congressman Kildee, for standing up for America and standing up for the people of this district and standing against what they tried to do in that budget last year when we made our veto stick. Thank you, Senator Levin. Thank you for all your many fights on behalf of the people of Michigan and the people of the United States. I hope you all will send Carl Levin and Dale Kildee back to the United States Congress.

I want to thank all the fine people from Michigan who came with me, including your former Governor, Jim Blanchard, and your former Senator, Don Riegle, and a whole bunch of other folks who came here with us.

And I'd like to thank my friend Vinnie Johnson for being the emcee. I've never seen him emcee anything, and I was wondering if he had as many moves up here as he did on the basketball court. [Laughter] Did he do well?

I want to thank Alice Moore for singing the national anthem; the Anointed Voices of Praise; the GANG—God's Anointed Next Generation; the Pontiac High School Band; the Pontiac Northern High School Band; the fellow that played the saxophone, Randy Scott. Thank you all. Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm taking this train through the heartland of America. We've been in West Virginia and Kentucky, all through Ohio and now into Michigan. And I'm doing it for two reasons: First, selfishly, at this, the beginning of what will be my last campaign, to go to Chicago to once again accept the nomination of my party for President, I wanted to go through America's heartland. I wanted to look into the faces, into the eyes, and into the hearts of the people I have been working and fighting for for 4 years to make America a better place. And second, I wanted you to see that not only is this train on the right track, America is on the right track for the 21st century.

I'm proud of our convention in Chicago. I wish Hillary and Chelsea were with me. They started out with me, but Hillary had to go home to Chicago, and she's going to speak tonight. I hope you'll go home and watch it and give her a cheer. And our daughter stayed with me a little while longer, but she left me this morning in Toledo because she wanted to hear Mom give her speech, so that's where they are.

But we've had a wonderful time on this trip. You heard the mayor say we started the morning in Toledo. Last night an autoworker from Toledo was one of the American citizens speaking at the opening of the Democratic Convention. And he was speaking there because the work we have done with the auto industry to open new markets abroad helped to put 700 jobs in the oldest automobile plant in America, in Toledo, Ohio, built in 1910—an automobile plant since 1910. That 1910 auto plant is exporting over 41,000 Jeeps overseas this year, selling our cars.

And let me tell you why it happened. It happened because the UAW and the management have a partnership. It happened because they're working together. It happened because 70 percent of the people in that plant are getting continuing education, and they made so much money for Chrysler last year, the workers got an average bonus of \$8,000. Now, why? Because that's a company that believes that if they make money, the workers ought to have their fair share. That's good for America. It's right for America. But guess what? It turned out to be

good for the company. For the first time in 20 years, it is the United States that is making and selling the largest number of automobiles of any country in the world.

Then we went on to Wyandotte, and there we gathered in front of a beautiful old library, about 100 years old, and a huge crowd turned out. And I was introduced by two really young people—not grown young people, I mean young people—about 8 years old, maybe 7. And we built them little platforms, and they stood up in front of the library and they read the end of that wonderful little children's book, "The Little Engine That Could." Do you know that story? The little engine had only been used for switching cars. The little engine had never been over the mountain. But the toys couldn't get to the boys and girls unless the little engine went over the mountain for the only time in its life. And the little engine kept saying "I think I can. I think I can." I still remember reading that book to Chelsea over and over and over again. [Laughter] But you know what? The message gets through. And that's a message every child in America, without regard to race or income or background, ought to have, because they can if we give them a chance. They can if we give them a chance.

And there in Wyandotte we made a commitment, a commitment to make sure that if this administration is returned, we are going to put out 30,000 tutors; we're going to mobilize a million volunteers. We're going to ask AmeriCorps to take as its main charge teaching children to read so that by the year 2000, every boy and girl in the third grade in America will be able to read well on their own.

And then we went to Royal Oak. I didn't see the royal oak, but I saw the biggest crowd of folks I ever saw in a long time. And there the National Association of Police Officers endorsed Bill Clinton and Al Gore in the Presidential election, because for 4 years in a row the crime rate has been coming down in America because we're putting 100,000 police on the street, because we did pass the Brady bill—and according to Mrs. Brady last night at our convention, 100,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers have not been able to get guns, but no hunter has lost a gun since we did that—and because we have to keep working until all of our children are free and safe.

I met one young woman police officer up on that platform who was in the D.A.R.E. pro-

gram. Chelsea still talks about her fifth-grade D.A.R.E. officer. One of the things that we did that I was so proud of was to pass the safe and drug-free schools law, to give our communities the resources to send people into these schools when the children are young and try to help them stay off drugs in the first place. It's one thing that isn't going so well in this country; teenage drug use is going up. But when the Congress tried to cut the safe and drug-free schools program, I said, "No, we've got a problem. We need to do more of that." We turned it around, and we're going forward. And they stayed with us.

So it's been a wonderful day. And it's real nice now. I look around here, I look in this audience, and I see what makes America great. I want to lead this country into the 21st century with the American dream alive for every person in America. I believe that we ought to have a country where everybody has a chance to live up to their God-given abilities, everyone has a chance to live out their dreams. To do it we have to have opportunity for everybody, responsibility from everybody, and we have to recognize that we are all one country, in spite of all of our differences, and we better get used to it and like it and go forward together.

That's what AmeriCorps is about. That's what this Golden Opportunity Club is about. That's what these Scout leaders and the Scouts are all about.

Audience member. The cheerleaders!

The President. The cheerleaders. Look at the little kids. Give them a hand there. [Applause] And where are our veterans' leaders? We've got some veterans over here somewhere. Thank you. And here's what this is about.

Audience members. Teachers!

The President. I'm coming to you. [Laughter] Oh, no, no, no. I'm coming to you. I've got a special thing to say about you.

So here's what I want you to think about. I want all of you to think in your own mind: What do I want my country to look like when we start this new century? What do I want my country to look like when my children are my age? What kind of legacy do I want to leave to my grandchildren? If we have more opportunity, more responsibility, and we're one American community, there is no stopping this country. Our best days are ahead. That's what I've been working on.

Number one, I knew when I became President we had to get that deficit down to get interest rates down to put people back to work. Now we've got over 10 million new jobs, and we're just getting warmed up. We brought the deficit down 4 years in a row for the first time in a President's administration since before the Civil War. We would have a surplus today in our budget—a surplus—if it weren't for the interest we have to pay on the debt run up in the 12 years before I showed up. But I'm working on it, and I want you to let me finish the job. I want you to let me finish the job. And we did this, and we're going to balance that budget without cutting education, cutting environmental protection, and breaking the backs of Medicare and Medicaid.

And we have to make sure that ordinary Americans can benefit from this economy. We have got to do that. We had a good week for ordinary Americans last week. We raised the minimum wage for 10 million workers. The same bill contained a tax cut for small businesses, who create most of our jobs, so they can invest more in their businesses, and made it easier for them to take out pensions for themselves and their workers and for the workers in small businesses to keep those pensions when they change jobs. That was a good thing.

The same bill gave a \$5,000 tax credit to adults who will adopt children, and even more if the children have disabilities. And it removed the barriers to cross-racial adoption. There's a lot of kids out there that need a happy home. That was a good thing to do, that we did.

And the Congress passed the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill that your two Members here had been working for for a long time. It says to 25 million Americans, just because somebody in your family has been sick, they can't take your insurance away from you anymore. It says you don't lose your insurance when you change jobs. This is a good thing.

But we have to do more. We have to do more. We ought now to say just because you can't lose your insurance doesn't mean you can pay for it. We ought to help families that are unemployed keep their health insurance for 6 months. I'm for that. I want to help people who have someone in their family with Alzheimer's and they're trying to care for them, get a little respite care. That's in my balanced budget plan, too, so they can keep their families and take care of them. We have to do more.

And I want you to believe that we can do these things.

The most important thing we have to do is to make sure every child in this country and every adult in this country can get the education they need. And I want to say to you—I don't know about the rest of you, but I wouldn't be standing up here if it weren't for my teachers, the people that believed in me. And I know that not every school is perfect and not every class is successful, but we've still got a public education system that is doing its best to take everybody that comes in the door and give all those kids a chance. And some of these teachers are laboring under great difficulties. And so I say to you, we need to make a commitment that we're going to do what we can to take responsibility for our schools and lift up the people that are trying to make them work, not get out here and bash them day-in and day-out. We need to be lifting them up.

I want to see—I want to see every classroom in this country, every single one, in 4 years not only have the computers they need, not only have teachers trained in the computers, but I want every single classroom hooked up to the worldwide information superhighway—everyone.

Now, consider what this means. This could mean that for the first time in the history of the United States ever, children in the poorest urban classrooms, children in the most remote hill or hollow of Appalachia, would have access to the same information in the same time at the same quality as the children in the wealthiest, best financed schools in the United States of America. It has never happened before. Then we'll see what happens on those test scores. Then we'll see what happens.

I want to see an America where every young person can go to college and every adult can go to college. Four years from now, I want 2 years of education after high school, the equivalent of a community college diploma, to be just as universal as a high school diploma is today. And I want to give you a tax credit to pay for those 2 years and a deduction for all college costs to up to \$10,000 a year of tuition. That's a tax cut. That's a tax cut we can pay for and a tax cut that will pay for itself many times over. We need to do that.

Well, there's a lot more I'd like to tell you, but you get the idea. We've got 10 million more jobs, 1½ million fewer people on welfare.

Twelve million people took advantage of the family and medical leave law and didn't lose their jobs, and that's a good thing for America. We've got 4½ million new homeowners, 10 million American families who refinanced their homes at lower interest rates, 50 million Americans breathing cleaner air. We cleaned up more toxic waste dumps in 3 years than the previous administrations did in 12. You get the picture. You get the picture?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. We're on the right track. We're moving in the right direction. We've got 10 million people with a minimum wage increase. But we've got to do it.

Will you help us stay on the right track?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Will you help us all the way to November?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Will you stay with us all the way to 2000?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Will you stand with the children in your community?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:37 p.m. on the rear platform of the 21st Century Express at the Amtrak station. In his remarks, he referred to Jay LeBlanc and Jenna Blahunka, AmeriCorps volunteers; Mayor Walter Moore of Pontiac; and civil rights activist Rosa Parks.

Remarks at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan August 27, 1996

The President. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. It's great to be back at Michigan State. Thank you. I want to thank first Letha Miller for that wonderful introduction and for her example. Weren't you proud of her? I thought she did a great job.

I thank President McPherson and your board chairman, Bob Weiss, for welcoming me. I know the mayors of Lansing and East Lansing are here. And somewhere Senator Levin has a Lansing Lugnuts baseball cap for me. I don't know where it is, but I'm prepared to wear it. There it is. What do you think? I like it.

I would like to thank the Olympians who are here from Michigan: Paul McMullen, Eric Namesnik, and Mike Castle. I'd like to thank the Paralympian, Ed McGinnis. I'd like to thank especially my good friend Carl Levin for being here, and I hope you'll send him back to the Senate from Michigan. He's a good man who does a good job for you.

And I want to say a special word about Debbie Stabenow, who is running for Congress. I'm very proud of the fact that we put in the direct loan program to lower the cost and im-

prove the repayment terms of college loans so no one would ever have to decline to go to college because of the loan burden. Everyone can pay it back as a percentage of their income. I'm very proud that we increased Head Start. I'm very proud that we did things for education. And I'm proud that I vetoed the budget of the Republican Congress when they tried to undo it all. And I believe a great university like Michigan State is entitled to be represented in the United States Congress by someone who believes in student loans, not someone who tries to abolish them. And I think you should make a change.

Folks, I've had a wonderful couple of days. Hillary and Chelsea and I started out on this train in West Virginia, and then Hillary went home to Chicago to start our convention, and Chelsea and I went through West Virginia, Kentucky, into Ohio. Then this morning in Toledo, Chelsea went to hear her mom speak tonight. And thank goodness, since we're a little late—I'm sorry we are, but I got to hear her mom speak tonight, too, on the train, and she was terrific. I was so proud of her.

And today we have been in Michigan. This train I'm taking across America is going across this heartland of our country for two reasons. For one thing, I really wanted to go to this