

Remarks in Covington, Tennessee August 31, 1996

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. You know, not only is Al Gore the most influential and effective Vice President in the history of this country, he now makes me look stiff. [Laughter] But I can deal with it. Thank you, Mr. Vice President. I think you can all see that Hillary and Tipper and Al and I love coming across this country and especially coming into western Kentucky.

I want to thank Mayor Bailey and the people of Covington; your great native son, Speaker Naifeh; and Houston Gordon and all the other people from western Tennessee for making us feel so welcome. Thank you, and God bless you.

Now, I know you've been waiting a long time, and I appreciate that, but there were so many people alongside the road we had to stop and shake hands with a few of them. There were thousands of them. They're Tennesseans, too, and they're Americans, too. I thank Congressman Tanner and Governor McWherter for being with us all along this way. I'm glad Mr. Trotter and Mr. Ford are with us; Lois DeBerry, who has been with us all along the way; Bill Purcell.

Ladies and gentlemen, I won't take a lot of your time. I spoke to the Nation on Thursday night from Chicago, and I said what I had to say. But I would like just to ask you a simple question. Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I want to build a bridge that everyone has a chance to walk across, which means we've got to have the best education system in the world for all of our children. Will you help me build it? [Applause]

The Vice President said that we do respect not only Senator Dole for his 35 years in Congress and his service to the Nation but also Mr. Kemp and Mr. Perot. But we have differences. In the last 4 years, we worked hard to make college loans more affordable to all of our people. We worked hard to give school districts more money for safe and drug-free schools and more money to stay open after school to give our kids something to do if they needed it in communities. We worked hard to put more children in Head Start.

We worked hard, in short, from beginning to end. And the people who led the fight against what we tried to do are the people who are now leading the fight against us in this Presidential campaign, including the nominee of the other party. I believe we were right and they were wrong, and I think we're right for the future. I want to build a country in which every single third grader in the entire United States can read a book on their own. Will you help me do that?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I want us to have an education system in which by the year 2000, in Covington, Kentucky, and every—now, wait a minute—in Covington, Kentucky, in Covington, Tennessee, Covington, Massachusetts, in every Covington in America, every single one, every child will have access not only to computers with trained teachers but with computers that are hooked up to the information superhighway so that everybody in America, whether in the poorest districts or the richest, has access for the first time ever to the same information in the same time at a level of quality never before true in our history. Will you help me build that bridge to the future?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I want to build a bridge to the future in which 2 years of education after high school becomes just as normal as a high school education is today because we give a tax credit worth the tuition cost for the typical community college in every State in America, so we will finance 2 years of community college education for everybody who needs it. Will you help me build that kind of bridge to the future? [Applause]

I want to give the American people a tax deduction for the cost of any college tuition up to \$10,000 a year. Will you help me build that kind of bridge to the future? [Applause]

I want to build a bridge to the future built on a strong and growing economy. Four years ago, we had a record deficit. It was going higher. We had high interest rates, high unemployment, and stagnant wages. Four years later, we've had 10 million new jobs, 4½ million new homeowners, a record number of new small

businesses, the lowest rates of unemployment and inflation and home mortgages in 28 years. That is something our opponents can't say anything about, it's just the truth. It happened.

Now, it happened because in 1993 we took the hard decisions to bring down the deficit, bring down interest rates, while protecting education and the environment and our research and Medicare and Medicaid. That's how we did it. Now what I ask you to do is to help me balance the budget—to keep interest rates down, to keep your home mortgage payments, your car payments, and your credit card payments down, to make money available for people to start businesses—but don't hurt Medicare, Medicaid, education, the environment; protect it.

Can we have a tax cut? You bet we can. But it ought to be a tax cut targeted to the people who need it and targeted to things that will strengthen families and education: a tax cut for children under 13 to help parents care for them; a tax cut for college tuition; a tax cut in the form of an IRA you can take money out of to buy that first home, deal with a medical emergency, educate your children. We can pay for that kind of tax cut. And no one should have to pay taxes when they sell a home on the gain they get from selling their homes. We can pay for that, and we ought to have it.

Now, our opponents say, "We will give you more money. Vote for us." But what they don't say is this: If they cut taxes as much as they say—let's just assume they could do it—if they did, they'd have to cut Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment more than they did in the budget that Senator Dole and Congressman Gingrich passed that I vetoed. Do you want that?

Audience members. No—o—o!

The President. And even then they wouldn't pay for it. So what would happen? Bigger deficits. We have worked so hard to move toward a balanced budget. We're going to throw it all out the window, let interest rates go up again, let your home payments, your car payments, your credit card payment go up again, let business loan costs go up again? I don't think so.

Will you help me build a bridge to the future with the right kind of tax cuts and a balanced budget and a growing economy? *[Applause]*

I want to build a bridge to the future with the crime rate coming down. I am sick and tired of going to any place in the United States

of America and turning on the evening news and the first story is always a crime story. I want it to be the last story on the news. I want there to be no crime stories on the news.

Folks, I'm proud of the fact that the crime rate has come down for 4 years in a row in America. I'm proud of the fact that we passed a crime bill to put 100,000 police on the street. I'm proud of the fact that when my opponent and Speaker Gingrich tried to repeal our commitment to put 100,000 police on the street, I vetoed it and we're still putting the police out there and the crime rate is still coming down. And I want you to help me keep those 100,000 police going on the street. Will you help me build a bridge to the future with safe streets and police officers? *[Applause]*

I want to build a bridge to the future where families that work hard and do their best to raise their kids can succeed at home and at work. I'm proud of the fact that the first bill I signed has now given 12 million American families the chance for the adults to take a little time off when a baby is born or a parent is sick without losing their jobs. It was good, and I was for it. My opponent led the fight against it. We were right.

I want to extend the family leave law to say you can take a little time off without losing your job to go to a parent-teacher conference or take your children to a doctor's appointment. I want to make it possible for people who earn overtime to make up their own mind about whether to take the overtime in cash or time with their families, depending on what that family needs. I want us to succeed at home and at work. That's what my commitment is. Will you help me build an America where we can do that? *[Applause]*

I want us to build an America where we prove we can protect our God-given environment and grow our economy. We have cleaned up more toxic waste dumps in the last 3 years than the previous administration did in 12. I want to clean up two-thirds more by the year 2000, the worst, because 10 million kids live within 4 miles of a toxic waste dump. These children here ought to be growing up next to parks, not poison, everywhere in the United States. Will you help me build that kind of bridge to the future? *[Applause]*

Finally, let me just make one last point. I want us to build a bridge to the future that is strong enough and wide enough for every

one of us to walk across. On Tipper Gore's birthday and my birthday and that beautiful 3-year-old girl's birthday over there, August 19th, we came to west Tennessee and we visited a white church and a black church that had been burned. And Hillary and Tipper and Al and I worked on rebuilding the African-American church. And I've done a lot to try to sensitize the American people about how terrible it is to burn churches or deface synagogues or mosques or any other religious institutions in this country and how terrible it is for us to look down on other people because they are of a different race or religion than we are. That's not America.

I have spent a lot of time as your President dealing with problems that we have as Americans around the world, because other people refuse to get along with one another, because other people—whether it's in the Middle East or Northern Ireland or Bosnia or Africa or you name it—insist on killing each other because they're of a different race, a different tribe, a different ethnic group, a different religion. In America, we say all you have to do is believe

in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, be willing to work hard and play by the rules. You're our kind of person. We're going arm in arm with you into the future.

Will you help me build that kind of America? Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century? Will you do it for the next 68 days? Will you do it for 4 years after that? Will you talk to your friends and neighbors and ask them? [Applause]

Thank you. God bless you. I'm proud to be here in Covington. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Russell B. Bailey of Covington; Jimmy Naifeh, speaker, Tennessee House of Representatives; Houston Gordon, Tennessee senatorial candidate; Ned Ray McWherter, former Tennessee Governor; Don Trotter and Harold E. Ford, Jr., candidates for Tennessee's Seventh and Ninth Congressional Districts, respectively; and Lois DeBerry, speaker pro tempore, and Bill Purcell, majority leader, Tennessee House of Representatives.

Remarks on Concluding a Bus Tour in Memphis, Tennessee August 31, 1996

The President. Thank you. Thank you for waiting. You have made us very happy tonight. It's wonderful to see you. I want to thank Mayor Herenton and everyone else here in Memphis who worked hard to make this night a reality.

Hillary and Tipper and Al and I, we kind of like doing this. Can you tell that? [Applause] And when we look out and see you, the people we've been working for and fighting for for the last 4 years, it makes it all worth it. We can see what it is we've been doing in the hope, in the spirit, in the energy, in the happiness of your reception. Thank you so much.

I want to thank Lois DeBerry and Bill Purcell and Speaker Naifeh and all the members of the Tennessee Legislature who are here. Chairman Farris, thank you for being here. I want to thank all these Congressmen-to-be. Congressman Ford, thank you for your friendship and your service in the Congress. And about-to-be

Congressman Ford, thank you for that barn-burning speech and what you want to do.

Mr. Trotter, thank you, and I want you to help him. Those of you who live in his district, he needs your help and he has votes around here. We need your help. Houston Gordon, thank you for your speeches and for being brave enough and good enough to get out here and make this run for the Senate. We need you there.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me just say one thing before I get into my remarks here. You heard the Vice President say what he did. You remember the awful budget fight we had. We wanted to balance the budget. We brought the deficit down. But we said, we're not going to balance the budget on the backs of the people that we depend upon to carry us into the future or that got us here. We're not going to cut education. We're not going to hurt the environment. We're not going to wreck Medicare and