

Remarks at a Labor Day Festival in Milwaukee, Wisconsin September 2, 1996

The President. Thank you.

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

The President. Thank you. Wow! Thanks for the welcome. Can you keep this spirit until November? Can you spread it to other people in Wisconsin?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Can we keep the Nation on the right track with it?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I think so, too. Happy Labor Day! Thank you for letting me be a part of it. Thank you, Senator Herb Kohl, and thank you, Senator Russ Feingold, for representing the people of Wisconsin and the people of the United States here.

I know that Congressman Jerry Kleczka and Congressman Tom Barrett spoke earlier. Will you keep them in the Congress? We need them there. [Applause] And Wisconsin, you will have three, count them, three—one, two, three—open seats, three chances to send three Democrats to the United States House of Representatives to help us keep this country on the right track. Will you do that?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I want to thank Mayor Norquist for being here. I thank the majority leader—I like that sound—the majority leader of the Wisconsin Senate, Chuck Chvala, and the minority leader of the House, Wally Kunicki. Thank you both for being here and all the legislators that are here; the city council chair, John Kalwitz; the Milwaukee County Board chair, Karen Ordanans.

And let me just say there are a lot of other people that I'd like to recognize, but I want to say a special word of thanks to Gerry McEntee. Gerry McEntee, he supported me in '92 when nobody thought I could win except my mother and Gerry McEntee. My own home was divided on whether we could win, but Gerry McEntee thought we could win. And I was watching Gerry up here talking and I thought, Gerry McEntee has got one speed, fast. Gerry McEntee has got one volume, loud. [Laughter] But he's got a big heart, and if you were in a foxhole you'd want him in there with you,

fighting for the future of your family. And I'm glad he's in there with me.

I want to thank all of those who have performed here earlier today, the Eddie Butts Band, the Unity In Community Choir; thank those who spoke here on behalf of the issues that you are concerned about. I want to thank all the labor leaders who are here. I want to say a special word of thanks to the woman who has been badgering me to come to this event since I don't know how long, Rosemarie McDowell. Thank you, Rosemarie, I showed up. I want to thank the members of the labor movement in America for electing a leader like John Sweeney, a man with energy and vigor and direction and passion, a man who has brought our working families together and is helping us to move forward.

And I want to say here on this Labor Day when we work to honor our working families, I'd like to thank the labor movement for something else. You know, most members of labor unions will not be affected by the increase in the minimum wage law. Oh, some will, but the vast majority won't. But organized labor stood with me and worked for 2 years to raise the minimum wage law for the other working families in the United States who don't pay union dues and don't have those good jobs. And I thank you, John Sweeney. I thank you, Gerry McEntee. I thank you, ladies and gentlemen. That's a gift you're giving to other working families, and I thank you. Thank you for doing that. God bless you. Thank you. On October 1st, 10 million American workers, most of them women, many of them with small children at home, people who are working full time and trying to get their piece of the American dream, those 10 million folks will get a raise because of the minimum wage law. Thank you for doing it for me. On this Labor Day, they should be indebted to you.

Folks, when I came to Wisconsin 4 years ago and asked you to support me, I said that I wanted our country to take a new direction. I wanted to restore the American dream. I wanted to bring our people together and not let us be divided. I wanted us to go into the next century the strongest force for peace and free-

dom and prosperity in the world. I said that we could go beyond the kind of political debate that had dominated Washington. Just like I said to the American people Thursday night, I'm a lot more interested in what to do than who to blame. I'm a "what to do" sort of person. And I think Wisconsin is a "what to do" sort of State.

I told you before, I will say again, I want this to be a campaign of ideas, not insults. I'm not interested in questioning the patriotism, the love of country of any of these folks who want to be President or Vice President of the United States or lead the Congress. What I want to do is to have a debate about our records and our ideas for the future. That's what matters, because you have to decide in this next election—you're going to elect the last President of the 20th century and the first President of the 21st century.

And the real issue is, how are we going to meet our challenges and protect your values? How are we going to do that? We're going to do it not by building a bridge to the past but by building a bridge to the 21st century, a bridge that all of us can walk across. We're going to do it not by telling people the Government is always your enemy and you're on your own; we're going to tell people we're all in this together and we're going forward together, all of us.

Folks, the nice thing about this election year and this Labor Day, unlike 4 years ago, is there is not as much guesswork in it this time. I mean, 4 years ago when I came here, Al Gore and I asked you to take a chance on us. We said, take a chance on us. And President Bush and Mr. Perot, they were telling you about how terrible my State was, a small Southern State. I heard all that stuff. They said, "You can't take a chance on these guys; they haven't been shaving but a month or two." [Laughter] You remember all the stuff they said.

Well, now you know. Four years ago, we had high unemployment, stagnant wages, rising crime, rising welfare rolls, a country that was becoming more divided, an electorate that was becoming more cynical. I've just finished a train ride and a bus ride with my wife, my daughter, my partners and friends, Al and Tipper Gore; a magnificent Democratic Convention. And I believe in the last 9 days plus, I've spoken to about 250,000 people and seen another couple of hundred thousand more. I can tell you some-

thing, folks, the rising tide of cynicism has been replaced by a rising tide of hope and belief in the future of America. We are going forward.

And so I say to you, why is that? Why is that? Because compared to 4 years ago, we have over 10 million new jobs. We have almost 4½ million new homeowners; 10 million American families have refinanced their homes with lower mortgage rates and saved a lot of money. We've had record numbers of new small businesses. People from Wisconsin and all over America are selling more of our products around the world than at any time before, with a huge increase. We are number one again in the production and sales of automobiles for the first time since the 1970's.

You heard John Sweeney talking about the Family and Medical Leave Act. Could there be hope because 12 million families have been able to take a little time off for the birth of a baby or a sick parent without losing their jobs? It made the economy stronger, not weaker, to do that. Fifteen million American families, our hardest pressed working families, working for the most modest wages, with children in the home, have gotten a tax cut. Every small business in this country that invests more money in the business next year than they did this year is eligible for a tax cut. But it's one that has enabled us to bring the deficit down every single year in 4 years of this administration, down 60 percent.

You know, folks, I just want to say this, and you all don't have to keep this a secret when you walk around and talk to your friends. You need to know that the last time an administration reduced the deficit in all 4 years of its term was in the 1840's, before the Civil War. And you need to know that we would have balanced the budget last year and we would have a surplus this year if it weren't for the interest we're still having to pay on the debt run up in the 12 years before I became President. We don't want to do that again. Let's don't do that again. We don't want to do that again.

There's more hope in this country because we passed legislation to protect the pensions of 40 million Americans. I was tired of seeing these pension funds go broke, and Secretary Reich has been working as hard as he can to get contributions into the pension funds so your pensions are protected. And we're trying to give small-business people in the minimum wage bill

easier access to retirement plans for themselves and their employees so they, too, will be protected, especially when they move from job to job. Every American ought to have the right to a good retirement plan, including those folks at Pabst.

Could it be that there is more hope in America because we're breathing cleaner air, because we've cleaned up more toxic waste dumps in 3 years than our predecessors did in 12? Could it be there is more hope here because we've upgraded the purity of our meat laws and our food laws and because finally, finally, finally just a couple of weeks ago we passed—in honor, in part, of the terrible sacrifice paid by people in this community—the Safe Drinking Water Act to make sure that we go forward to protect the public health of our people?

So I say to you, things are better than they were 4 years ago. We're on the right track. We're on the right road. We're building the right bridge, the bridge to the future, the bridge to the 21st century. Will you help us build it for 64 more days? [Applause] Will you help us build it for 4 more years? [Applause] Will you walk across it with all your brothers and sisters? [Applause] Will you do it? [Applause]

My friends, last night—you've already heard it said that I went to see the Packers this morning in Green Bay. I did that; I plead guilty. I hope you won't hold that against me. [Laughter] And it was funny because one of the Packers who had a pretty good game yesterday—

Audience member. Brett Favre!

The President. No, well, he had a great game. [Laughter] But one of them happens to be from my home State, Keith Jackson. And he reminded me when I saw him this morning that his wife was at our rally in Little Rock just last night. So I want to talk to you a few moments about the future because he reminded me of this rally last night.

I told the folks at home—a lot of the people who came to see me there have been working for me for more than 20 years now. And I said I want this campaign to be about the future. The record that we have made is relevant because it shows you that we'll do what we say in the future and it shows you that we're on the right track. But what really matters is the future. And I told the folks at home a story I'd like to tell you.

In 1984—this makes the point about how elections are about the future—in 1984 I was

out on a little country crossroads speaking to a rally way out in the hills in Arkansas, and I gave a barn-burning speech about what a great job I had done as Governor—I thought it was just great—and why they ought to reelect me. And this old boy came up to me in overalls and he said, "Bill, that's a fine speech you gave. And you do have a good record. But," he said, "that's what we hired you for. You drew a paycheck every 2 weeks, didn't you?" [Laughter] He said, "That's what we hired you for. What are you going to do if I renew your contract? That's what I want to know."

And that's what I tried to tell the American people in Chicago last Thursday night with my fellow Democrats. I'll tell you what we're going to do: We're going to finish building our bridge to the 21st century so every American family has a chance to benefit from a growing economy, from a community that's strong and with safe streets and a clean environment, and every family has a chance to succeed at home with their children and at work, perhaps the biggest challenge American working families face today.

So let me talk to you a little about that. I want to build a bridge to the 21st century with the best education system in the world. I want a million children in Head Start. I want every 8-year-old in America to be able to say when they look at a book, "I can read that all by myself." I want every classroom, every classroom and every library in every school in America not only to have the computers they need, not only to have the trained teachers they need but to be hooked up to the worldwide information superhighway.

Now, if you're like me and you're sort of in the dark ages when it comes to computers, let me tell you what that means; let me tell you what that means in practical terms. You hook all these computers up, all these classrooms to the Internet, it means that for the first time in the history of the United States of America, the children in the poorest urban schools, the children in the most remote rural schools will have access to the same knowledge in the same time at the same level of quality as the children in the wealthiest schools in the United States. It has never happened before. We can make it happen now. Will you fight for that kind of future for our country? Will you help me do that? [Applause]

Now, I also want to make it possible for every—every single American who wants to do

it to go to college and to get a good education. And I want to talk to you about three things. Number one, I want to make 2 years of education after high school, what most of us know as a community college degree at least, I want that to be just as universal in 4 years as a high school education is today. And that's why I called for a \$1,500 tax credit to the working families of America so that we can pay, through a tax cut, for the cost of tuition at any typical community college in the United States. I want America's working families to have a \$10,000 tax deduction for the cost of all college tuition, any tuition your kids have after high school, for the adults or the children.

And I want to take all the various training programs we've had over the years and put them in a block and say to you or your friends, if you lose your job or if you're underemployed and you qualify for a Federal training program, we will give you a skills grant worth up to \$2,600 a year. You take it where you want. You get the education you need. You start your life again with a better job, a higher wage, and a brighter future. That's the kind of education system I want for America. Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century? [Applause]

I want to allow working families to save more, to take out an IRA and to be able to save the money and withdraw it without penalty to pay for an education, to pay for a first-time home, to pay for a medical emergency. I want you to be able to sell your home and never owe any taxes on the gain. I want this to be a pro-family, pro-growth, pro-education tax package. You ought to have a tax credit for your children who are 13 or under that need more child care, need afterschool care.

But let me tell you something about this tax program. It's targeted to working families. It is paid for. It is designed to help promote childrearing, education, and work, the most important things to build strong families and successful workers. The most important thing is, this is all paid for.

Now, I want to say something. You can take 1,000 polls, you can talk to every political consultant in Washington and they'll tell you—they'd say to me, "President Clinton, do not go to a labor rally in Milwaukee and talk about balancing the budget. That bores people to tears. They only think about balancing the budget when the economy's in the tank, and then it seems like a nice thing to do. But nobody

really cares about it. It's boring, and besides, it's hard. And people don't want to hear about hard things."

Let me tell you something. I hope you care about it, because how do you think we got the economy going again? By bringing interest rates down. Why did we bring interest rates down? Because when we reduced the deficit, your Government wasn't in there borrowing all that money, and you could go borrow it. And the demand was less, so the interest rates were lower.

Now, our friends in the Republican Party, just last year they put out a little paper that they seem to have forgotten. It said, if we're not on a path to the balanced budget, interest rates will go up to 2 percent. Now they say, "Don't vote to reelect President Clinton. Vote for us; we'll give you a bigger tax cut." They say, "We'll give you a bigger tax cut."

Let me tell you about that bigger tax cut. Two things are going to happen. If they actually did it, two things would happen. Number one, if you thought the budget I vetoed was bad with its Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment cuts, with its \$15 billion raid on worker pension funds, with its tax increases on the lowest paid workers in America—all of that it had in the one I vetoed—you ain't seen nothing yet. If they pass this tax plan, they'll come back with deeper cuts. Is that what you want for our future?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. Will that bring us in? Of course not. Number two, it still won't cover the hole they'll blow in the deficit. So we'll have worse cuts and a bigger deficit. What does that mean? That means for you, your mortgage payment, your car payment, your credit card payment will go up. It means the business community—big business, small business, business in the middle—interest rates will be higher. They won't be able to borrow that money to invest to create more jobs, to create greater productivity, to earn more money, and raise wages.

So I tell you something, folks. Let's say the Democrats are pro-business and pro-labor. We're for balancing the budget and investing in education, the environment, and taking care of our folks through Medicare and Medicaid. That's our position. Will you help me build that bridge into the 21st century?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Will you help me keep this economy going and growing? Don't you want more jobs and higher income?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Let me say one other thing. I want to say it right here in Milwaukee. There's a lot of difference between talking about the issue of welfare reform and doing something about it. There are 1.8 million fewer people on welfare today than there were the day I became President. We didn't have to cut anybody's health care to do it; we didn't have to throw anybody into the street to do it—1.8 million fewer people. Why is that? Because most people on welfare who are able-bodied are dying to get off and will take a job if they have a chance to do it, if they can get the training to do it, if they can get the child care to do it.

Now, here's what this welfare reform bill I signed really does, pure and simple. And on Labor Day, we need to all listen to this, and we need to make a commitment. This bill says there is still a national guarantee for the health care of the children and the parent. There is still a national guarantee for the nutritional needs of the children and the parent. There is now national funds available for the first time for adequate child care if a person takes a low wage job, has to leave the kids behind, and they don't have the money for child care.

But the money that used to go in an income check every month will now be sent to the States or the localities, depending on what the State does, and they will have to figure out how to devise work for people who have been on welfare who are able-bodied, who will then do work for the income check. That is a good thing, except this: If you want to say to people, "You've got to go to work," there needs to be a job there for them to go see every day.

So I say, I am sick and tired, as a person who has spent time in welfare offices, who has talked to welfare people—I started working on welfare reform in 1980 before it was a cool, hot issue because I could see that the people who were trapped on it were the ones being hurt, and their children. But it is time now. We have changed the system. And I don't ever want to hear Republicans attacking Democrats again over welfare. I don't ever want to hear politicians attacking poor people again over welfare. I want the American people—everybody who's ever pointed their finger about this—to

figure out how are we going to take this new flexibility, this new power, how are we going to take the initiatives President Clinton proposed at the Democratic Convention, putting \$3 billion more into our cities to create jobs, giving more incentives to people who will hire somebody off welfare, the other things that we can do, and create jobs for these people. They deserve the jobs. You cannot put people in the street; you have to put people to work. That's what we have to make welfare reform all about, in an honorable, decent way. Will you help us build that kind of bridge to the 21st century? Every one of you, will you help me do that? [Applause] Their children need it. Our country needs it. Will you help do that? [Applause]

Folks, there's a lot of other things I'd like to say today. It's getting late and it's getting hot, but I want to tell you just one or two. Do you know that we still have 10 million kids in this country living within 4 miles of a toxic waste site, even though we cleaned up more sites in 3 years than were cleaned up in the 12 years before? If you give us 4 more years, we're going to clean up 500 more sites, the two-thirds worst. We want our children to grow up next to parks, not poison. Will you help us give our children that kind of future? Will you do that? [Applause] That will create jobs, raise incomes, and clean the environment. Will you help us do that? [Applause]

And the last thing I want to say is this. I have never been in a crowd of working people, talking to them and listening to them for any length of time, that I didn't find every family had at least one example of a time when they'd felt a terrible, gnawing conflict between their responsibilities as parents and their responsibilities at work.

You know, the American people are not lazy people. The average family is spending a lot more hours at work today than they did 25 years ago. Almost all parents are in the work force now. And the great challenge for our State—our country—is to figure out how people can do a good job of raising their kids and do a good job at work. That's what the family leave law was all about.

That's why I want to amend the family leave law and say you not only can have time off when there's an emergency, working people ought to be able to get some time off without losing their jobs to go to those regular parent-teacher conferences at school and take their kids

or their parents to the doctor. Will you help me build that kind of future? Will you do that? [Applause]

Now, this has been a great day, an enthusiastic day. You have made me very happy to see the spirit in your eyes. You're the kind of people that Al Gore and I have been fighting for and working for for 4 years, and I wouldn't take the world for this experience. But this is the beginning of this campaign, not the end—the beginning, not the end.

Are you going to help us build that bridge to the 21st century? [Applause] Sixty-four more days? [Applause] Four more years? [Applause]

Every one of you, we need you. Wisconsin, we need you.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. at the Summerfest Grounds. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor John O. Norquist of Milwaukee; Gerald W. McEntee, president, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); Rosemarie McDowell, chief steward, AFSCME Local 1055; and John Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks Announcing a Missile Strike on Iraq and an Exchange With Reporters

September 3, 1996

The President. Good morning. Three days ago, despite clear warnings from the United States and the international community, Iraqi forces attacked and seized the Kurdish-controlled city of Irbil in northern Iraq. The limited withdrawals announced by Iraq do not change the reality. Saddam Hussein's army today controls Irbil, and Iraqi units remain deployed for further attacks.

These acts demand a strong response, and they have received one. Earlier today I ordered American forces to strike Iraq. Our missiles sent the following message to Saddam Hussein: When you abuse your own people or threaten your neighbors, you must pay a price.

It appears that one Kurdish group, which in the past opposed Saddam, now has decided to cooperate with him. But that cannot justify unleashing the Iraqi army against the civilian population of Irbil. Repeatedly over the past weeks and months we have worked to secure a lasting cease-fire between the Kurdish factions. The Iraqi attack adds fuel to the factional fire and threatens to spark instability throughout the region.

Our objectives are limited but clear: to make Saddam pay a price for the latest act of brutality, reducing his ability to threaten his neighbors and America's interests. First, we are extending the no-fly zone in southern Iraq. This will deny Saddam control of Iraqi airspace from the Kuwaiti border to the southern suburbs of

Baghdad and significantly restrict Iraq's ability to conduct offensive operations in the region. Second, to protect the safety of our aircraft enforcing this no-fly zone, our cruise missiles struck Saddam's air defense capabilities in southern Iraq.

The United States was a cosponsor of United Nations Security Resolution 986, which allows Iraq to sell amounts of oil to purchase food and medicine for its people, including the Kurds. Irbil, the city seized by the Iraqis, is a key distribution center for this aid. Until we are sure these humanitarian supplies can actually get to those who need them, the plan cannot go forward, and the Iraqi Government will be denied the new resources it has been expecting.

Saddam Hussein's objectives may change, but his methods are always the same: violence and aggression against the Kurds, against other ethnic minorities, against Iraq's neighbors. Our answer to that recklessness must be strong and immediate, as President Bush demonstrated in Operation Desert Storm, as we showed 2 years ago when Iraq massed its forces on Kuwait's border, and as we showed again today.

We must make it clear that reckless acts have consequences, or those acts will increase. We must reduce Iraq's ability to strike out at its neighbors, and we must increase America's ability to contain Iraq over the long run. The steps we are taking today will further all those objectives. Time and again, Saddam Hussein has