

I'm very pleased that there are so many industry, environmental, and State and local government leaders here today working together to make this happen. I look forward to hearing your recommendations. And again, I want to thank Jack Gibbons and the other members of our administration team for being there, and I want to thank all of you for being there.

Thank you very, very much, and have a great meeting.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 a.m. by telephone from the Ramada Inn in Pueblo, CO, to the conference meeting in Golden, CO. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado and Ralph Peterson, president, CH2M Hill Corp.

Remarks in Pueblo, Colorado September 11, 1996

Thank you very much. Good morning. It's great to be back in Pueblo again. I want to say first, Dr. Martinez, thank you for welcoming us here to the courthouse. And all of you who live here must be so proud of this magnificent building. I love it. I think we should give Josh Rael another hand for doing such a good job on the national anthem. *[Applause]*

I want to thank all of those who spoke before me, Mike Beatty, Al Gurule, Lieutenant Governor Gail Schoettler, and Tom Strickland. I hope you will send Tom Strickland to the United States Senate. I have a lot of confidence in him, and as I'll say in a moment, when these people present themselves for Congress and the Senate, there are real consequences to your lives.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm glad to be back here today because this is an election season, but elections should not be divorced from our lives. The choices we make as citizens for those who represent us affect the way we live after the elections are over.

As I was sitting here looking at Mayor Webb making his remarks, and my longtime friend and former colleague, Governor Romer making his remarks, and I couldn't help thinking how lucky Colorado is to be served by public officials like this who can make a positive difference in people's lives.

I also have to tell that I was talking with Patricia Heine before she got up here to speak; she told me that she had become a police officer 7 years ago, after working on raising her sons. And I thought to myself, it's a pretty great country when a mother who loves her children and cares for other people's children has the willing-

ness, the ability, and is given the opportunity to go back to work in public safety to make this community and this State and our country a better place. And we thank you.

Today I want to talk, as Governor Romer said and Mayor Webb said, about the issue of crime, about the link between crime and drugs, and about what we have to do to make our streets safer if we're going to realize our vision for the 21st century. As your President, I have worked hard on a simple, straightforward vision for the next century, and especially for the children in this audience. We're only 4 years away from a brand new century and a brand new millennium. We're undergoing enormous changes, as all of you know, in the way we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world.

I want us to go into that next century as the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity. I want us to go into that century with all the American people in our mosaic from all different ethnic groups, all different walks of life, growing together and being stronger together in a close-knit community that help each other to make the most of their own lives. And I want to make sure the American dream is alive and well for every single man or woman, boy or girl, who is willing to work for it. And that is my vision: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and everybody has a place in our American community. I hope you'll help me to realize that.

We've worked very hard in the last 4 years to create economic opportunity, and this country is better off than it was 4 years ago. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 7½ years; 10½

million new jobs. We have 4½ million new homeowners. The deficit has gone down for 4 years in a row for the first time since the 1840's, before the Civil War. Wages are rising again for average working people for the first time in a decade. There are 1.8 million fewer people on welfare today than there were the day I took the oath of office.

Child support collections are up 40 percent; 40 million people have had their pensions protected; 12 million Americans have taken some time off in the family leave law, keeping their jobs while their babies were born or they had a sick parent they needed to take care of. The air is cleaner for 50 million Americans, and we have cleaned up more toxic waste dumps in 3 years than were cleaned up in the 12 years previous. We are moving in the right direction.

On October 1st, 10 million hard-working Americans will get a pay raise when the minimum wage law goes into effect. And that's a good thing for America.

Twenty-five million Americans will be helped by the Kennedy-Kassebaum health care reform bill which says you can't lose your health insurance anymore just because someone in your family gets sick or you have to change jobs. This country is on the right track for the 21st century.

I have worked hard to make these things possible by working with all people of good will who were willing to move our country forward, to change the politics of Washington from who's to blame to what are we going to do about it, and what can we do together?

I have asked the American people to join with me in building a bridge to the 21st century, a bridge that we can all walk across together, a bridge that will be strong enough to realize our dreams for the future, to give every child the chance to live up to his or her God-given potential. And I want you to help me build that bridge. Will you do that? *[Applause]*

We have to make educational opportunity available for all. That means we have to create the most excellent system of education in the world for all of our children without regard to their racial or ethnic background or whether they're poor, rich, or middle class, whether they live in poor, rural communities or big cities or some place in between. I have a plan to make sure that every 8-year-old child in America will be able to read on his or her own by the year 2000. And we need to do that.

If we keep to our commitment to make sure that every classroom and library and every school in the United States is hooked up to the information superhighway by the year 2000, every child for the first time in the history of this country—every child—will have access to the same information at the same level of quality in the same time as every other child, rich, poor, or middle class. That will revolutionize education. And we have to do that.

And finally, let me say, in this great community which has, among other things, a perfectly wonderful community college where I was the last time I came here—I want to ask you to help me make sure that in the next 4 years we make 2 years of education after high school, the equivalent of a community college degree, just as universal in America as a high school diploma is today by giving people a tax credit for the tuition there.

By giving people a tax credit for the tuition cost of a typical community college, by giving our American people a \$10,000 tax deduction per year for any tuition cost at any institution of higher education—undergraduate, graduate, community college, you name it—by letting the American people and letting more Americans take out more savings in an IRA, save that money, and then withdraw it tax-free to pay for college education, health care, or to buy a first-time home, that will build a bridge to the 21st century.

To build that bridge, we have to keep this economy growing steady and strong until every American has a chance to benefit from it. That means we have to balance the budget. But we have to do it in the right way. We must balance the budget to keep the interest rates coming down so that you can afford house payments, car payments, credit card payments. So that small-business people can afford to borrow money to build their businesses, we have made every small business in America eligible for a tax cut if they invest more money in their business. We are growing small businesses at a record rate, but we have to continue to balance the budget. But we can do it. And we must do it without wrecking Medicare, Medicaid, cutting back on our investments in education and protecting our environment. We have to do that.

We have to build a bridge to the 21st century where families can succeed at home and at work. Most parents—whether the family is a one-parent or a two-parent household—most

parents are working today, and most parents have to work. I hardly ever meet a family that doesn't tell me there has been some time in their lives when they've really faced a dilemma in the conflict between their obligations at work and their obligations at home.

That's why we worked hard to pass the family leave law. That's why we worked hard to increase childhood immunizations, to increase Head Start, to pass the V-chip law to give parents the ability to control inappropriate programming and its access through television to the young children. That's why we've worked hard to protect our young people from the dangers of marketing and selling tobacco which is illegal in every State but prevalent in every State. And that's why I believe we should expand the family and medical leave law to say in a very limited way, people also ought to be able to take their children to doctor's appointments and to the local parent-teacher conference without losing their jobs in this country. And I hope you'll help me do that.

We have a lot of environment work to do to build our bridge to the 21st century. There are still 10 million American children—listen to this—10 million American children living within 4 miles of a toxic waste dump. I want to clean up two-thirds of those dumps, the worst ones, in just the next 4 years, by far the most rapid pace in history. But it's important to us. Our children should be growing up next to parks, not poison. And I want you to help me build that bridge to the 21st century.

But let me tell you, we cannot—we cannot—build the right bridge to the 21st century unless our children and their families are safe in their homes, on their streets, in their schools, in their communities. Four years ago, I came to this wonderful community just 2 weeks before election day. I said I wanted to prove, and I quote—this is what I said then, that “you could be tough on crime and smart at the same time.” Well, 4 years later, I can tell you that that approach is possible, and it's working.

Just 2 years ago this Friday, in one of the proudest moments of my Presidency, I signed the 1994 crime bill. We began to put 100,000 police on our streets. We're about halfway home now. We have about 500 already funded in Colorado, five right here in Pueblo. We made “three strikes and you're out” the law of the land. We began helping States to build 100,000 new prison cells. We began to expand preven-

tion programs so our young people would have something to say yes to, not just no.

And let me say, not a single sportsman or hunter in Colorado—notwithstanding what they were told in 1994—has lost their hunting or sporting weapon—not a single, solitary one, not one. But you know what? Sixty thousand felons, fugitives, and stalkers could not get a handgun because of the Brady bill. It was the right thing to do. We are safer because of it.

Now, this strategy is working. For 4 years in a row, the crime rate has come down. But no matter how tough our penalties, no matter how many new prisons we build, we will never break this problem until we break the cycle of crime and drugs and stop the revolving door between prisons and drug use on the streets.

Let me be clear, the best antidrug program is still parents teaching their children right from wrong. It's still those D.A.R.E. officers in the schools standing up there in front of those classes and letting those little children with their wide eyes look at people in uniforms and say, “That's the kind of person I want to be, and that's the kind of behavior I want to have.”

That's why I fought for the safe and drug-free schools program, which puts antidrug counselors like Officer Heine in the classroom. The first bill I vetoed as President, the very first one, was a bill passed by this Congress that would have gutted the safe and drug-free schools program. I don't know about you, but I think we need more people like her, not fewer, in front of our children in the schools of America.

Last year Congress gave me about \$700 million less than I sought to fight drugs, and that's wrong, and I hope we can correct it before they go home. I appointed a four-star general, an American military hero, General Barry McCaffrey, to lead our attack on drugs, and he has developed a strategy for us that we will follow with great discipline over the next 5 years, targeted at keeping drugs away from our children and he deserves the support that he needs.

Illegal drugs are a significant force behind the vast majority of violent crimes in this country and a big part of the problem with juvenile crime. Drug dealers with guns, criminals on drugs, they contribute a lot to the misery that the rest of America has to endure.

Listen to this: Two-thirds of the men in State prisons have substance abuse problems. I have

signed an Executive order to require drug testing of anyone brought into the Federal system, but I have not been able to affect that. Listen to this. When criminals on parole go back on drugs, the chances are enormously high they will commit new crimes. Sixty percent—listen—60 percent of all the heroin and cocaine sold in the entire United States goes to people on bail, on probation, or on parole. Seventy-five percent of the prisoners with a history of heroin or cocaine use who are released without treatment go back to drugs within 3 months and return to crime. We have to stop this cycle, or we'll never get on top of the problem.

In spite of this problem, States often don't do much to test parolees or prisoners, or provide adequate treatment. That has to be changed. Drugs don't belong in prisons or in the hands of parolees. Parole is not a license to break the law, use drugs, and slip back into crime; it is a chance to go straight and live a better life.

So today I propose to offer legislation that will say to every State in the country, we are prepared to continue to use funds from our crime bill to help you build your prisons. But if you want that money, you now must start drug testing prisoners and parolees to break the cycle of crime and drugs. It's time to say to inmates, if you stay on drugs, you'll stay in jail; if you want out of jail, you have to get off drugs. It's time to say to parolees, if you go back on drugs, you'll go back to jail; if you want to stay on the street, stay off drugs. And I want you to help me send that message to America.

We know the States are hard-pressed, and we intend to do our part. Today the Department of Justice announced \$27 million in grants to States for testing and intervention with prisoners, to help them break this cycle. States can start using this money right now for drug testing and for intervention to help prisoners and parolees.

And let me tell you something, folks, this is not an election year pledge. This will work. A new report shows that in Delaware, prisoners who got treatment in prison and during work release were 75 percent drug-free and 70 percent arrest-free after 18 months; but 80 percent of the prisoners who did not receive treatment went back on drugs, and two out of three were arrested again. It is simple. We know what to do, now let's go do it. Let's build a bridge to the 21st century that breaks the cycle of crime and drugs.

I want to say to all of you, I am more optimistic than I was when I came here 4 years ago about our future. I am more idealistic about the possibilities of Americans to do good things together. But we must make a commitment to work together, to create opportunity for all, to get responsibility from all of our citizens, and to reach out to one another across the lines that divide us so that we can go forward together. That is the bridge that I seek to build to the 21st century, and I hope you will help to build it.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:17 a.m. at the Pueblo County Courthouse. In his remarks, he referred to Richard Martinez, Pueblo County commissioner; Josh Rael, student, Pueblo South High School; Michael Beatty, chairman, Colorado Democratic Party; Al Gurule, candidate for Colorado's Third Congressional District; Lt. Gov. Gail Schoettler and Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado; Colorado senatorial candidate Tom Strickland; Mayor Wellington Webb of Denver; and police officer Patricia Heine. The President also referred to his memorandum of December 18, 1995, on Federal arrestee drug testing, published in the *Public Papers of the Presidents: William J. Clinton, 1995, Book II* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), p. 1904.

Remarks in Sun City, Arizona September 11, 1996

Thank you very, very much. I'll tell you, we're off to a pretty good start. Hello, Desi. I'm glad

to see you. See that lady right there? She used to take care of my daughter right after she was