

clean up 500 more, and we can say, "Our kids in America, they're growing up next to parks, not poison." That's the bridge we want to build to the 21st century.

So that's the choice. For 6 weeks and 5 days, the Vice President and Hillary and Tipper and I, we're committed to making this a campaign of ideas, not insults. We don't want to ask who's to blame; we want to ask, what are we going to do about it?

And we want to ask you, each and every one of you, to give us 6 weeks and 5 days of hard effort, talking to your friends and neighbors about what this election is about. It's about what these children will have in America when they are our age. It's about what we will be like

when we charge into the 21st century. It's about whether we're going forward with opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a sense of community in this country that says, if you believe in the principles of the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights, if you're willing to work hard and be responsible, we're going to build a bridge to the 21st century that you can walk across with us, hand in hand, arm in arm. A good future, the best days are still to come.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:28 p.m. at Yelm City Park.

Remarks in Centralia, Washington September 19, 1996

The President. Thank you.

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

The President. Thank you so much. Thank you for waiting for us. Thank you for making us feel so very welcome. What a beautiful, beautiful community this is. I love this street. I love these stores. I love all your signs. We do feel welcome to your village, and we're glad you're here with us to build that bridge to the 21st century. Thank you.

I want to say a special word of thanks to the mayor and the other local officials. Thank you to the two bands that played so well for us. Thank you very, very much. Thank you, John Simpson, for your welcome and for the power of your life's example. Now, when I leave town I will not have taken any money off you in a poker game, but I hope that won't weaken your support for the Clinton/Gore ticket. We're proud of you. Thank you, sir.

And thank you, Gary Locke, not only for running for Governor but for the good, positive, constructive, progressive, future-oriented campaign that you ran and that you will run. Ladies and gentlemen, the partnership between the National Government and the States is critical and will be more critical in the next few years. We're reforming the welfare laws, for example, and giving the States the power to design programs for able-bodied people on welfare to have to

work in return for support for their children. You want people who care about those kids, who want to bring those folks into the mainstream, who have both compassion as well as a strong work ethic. I think you know who should be the next Governor of the State of Washington, Gary Locke.

Let me also say a special word of thanks to the Vice President for what he said about the fight we had last year with the leaders of Congress—with Speaker Gingrich and Senator Dole and those who were committed to their Contract With America. I remember well in 1994 when they went across the country and they won the Congress back. They won as many seats in the State of Washington, including this one, as in any State in the country. And they said a few clear things. They said, "We have this Contract With America, and it will move America forward." They neglected to say they wanted to cut education, they wanted to weaken the environment, they wanted to raise taxes on the poorest working people, they wanted to permit people to raid their workers' pension funds, they wanted to abolish AmeriCorps, abolish our student loan program, abolish the safe and drug-free schools program. They wanted to turn Medicare into a two-tier system. They wanted to stop Medicaid's guarantee of health care to poor

children, to pregnant women, to families with people with disabilities, to the elderly in our nursing homes. They left out all that fine print in 1994.

But when they took office we saw what they wanted. They also attacked us for two things. They said the economic program which passed in 1993 raised the taxes of ordinary Americans, their income taxes. It wasn't true. They said that the crime bill of 1994 was going to take guns away from the hunters and sportsmen of Washington. And guess what, that wasn't true.

Well, now you've had 2 years to see them and to see the results of our efforts. And what I want to say to you is the country is going to be looking at Washington State because the voters of Washington State, by the narrowest of margins in five congressional districts, bought on to Mr. Gingrich's and Mr. Dole's Contract With America. And now you have seen the results. First of all, what they told you about our program was wrong. We have 10½ million more jobs; they were wrong. The deficit has gone down, not up; they were wrong.

You've seen our crime bill. The crime rate has gone down for 4 years in a row. We're putting 100,000 police on the street. Not a single Washington hunter has lost a weapon in 2 years. They did not tell the rural people of Washington the truth. But 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers couldn't get guns because of the Brady bill. We were right, and they were wrong.

And in pursuit of their contract, they shut the Government down when we pleaded with them to balance the budget in a humane way. We said, we're for balancing the budget. After all, we brought the deficit down, and all of you voted against us. But we don't want to destroy Medicare or Medicaid or cut education or turn our backs on our commitment to the environment. We can't raise taxes on the poorest working people in America. We can't allow a raid on our pension funds. We went through that in the 1980's, and I saw too many people have their retirement taken away. Let's just balance the budget. We've got the agreed-upon savings. And they said no; they shut the Government down.

Now, folks, right here in Centralia you're going to be looked to all over America. People are going to ask, did the people of Centralia, Washington, really vote for that contract on America? Did they really vote to stop the com-

mitment to put 100,000 police on the street? Did they really vote to end the safe and drug-free school program? Did they really vote to deprive these fine young people here of the opportunity to earn their way through college by serving their communities in the AmeriCorps program?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. Did they really vote to end our new college loan program, which is lower cost and gives children better repayment options so that no one need fear going to school because of the debt? They're going to be looking to you for answers, and I hope your answer will be, "We'd like for Brian Baird to be our Congressman." And I'd like for him to come up here and be seen.

[At this point, Mr. Baird, candidate for Washington's Third Congressional District, made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you. Folks, I want you just to take a couple of minutes. You waited a long time here today, and I want to talk to you about the next 4 years. This election will see the American people elect the last President of the 20th century and the first President of the 21st century. At a time of enormous change in how we work and live and relate to the rest of the world, just think of it: Here we are in a beautiful, traditional American town, a great Main Street here, in a State where one in five jobs is dependent upon our ability to trade with people all around the world. This is a new age.

Let me tell you, to the young people here—there are young people in this audience who will soon be doing jobs that have not been invented yet. Many of them will do jobs that have not been imagined yet. You will see miraculous medical discoveries. I'm so glad we have this section here for our friends who have come in wheelchairs. Do you know that just a few weeks ago, for the first time ever, laboratory animals that had their spines severed had movement in their lower limbs because of nerve transplants. There are going to be things happening in the next 10 or 20 or 30 years that we never could have imagined. And we have to be in the forefront. We recently agreed to undertake with IBM—the United States and IBM—to build a supercomputer—listen to this—a supercomputer that will do more calculations in a single second than you can go home

and do on your hand-held calculator in 30,000 years.

The point I'm trying to make is that we are going to see Americans with more chances to live out their dreams and live up to their God-given abilities than at any point in the history of our great country if we make the right decisions, if we build the right sort of bridge to the 21st century, if we say we want opportunity for all, responsible citizenship from all, and everybody has a place in our community. We want everybody, everybody, without regard to where they start in life, without regard to their race or their background, if you will work hard and be a good citizen, you're a part of our country and we want to walk over that bridge into the next century with you. That's what we have to do.

I want us to build a bridge to the 21st century with the best education system in the world. I want every classroom and library in America, from the smallest rural schools to the most remote mountain villages to the poorest inner-city schools, to be hooked up to the information superhighway by the year 2000, to the Internet, to the World Wide Web so that we can say—think of this, here in Centralia, think of this—we will be able to say by the year 2000 for the first time in our history, every child in America, no matter where he or she goes to school, will have access to the same information in the same time at the same level of quality as any other child in the richest school districts in the country, everybody has access to it immediately. Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I want us to build a bridge to the 21st century where every young person, every middle-aged person and every older person who needs it can go to college and know that it can be paid for in a country with opportunity for all, and here's how I want to do it. Number one, I want every family to be able to take out an IRA and save in it and then withdraw from it to pay for college costs without having any taxes to pay on it.

Number two, number two, I want to make 2 years of community college just as universal in 4 years as a high school diploma is today. And it's easy to do. Here's how we're going to do it. We're going to say you can deduct, dollar for dollar from your tax bill, the cost of the tuition at a typical community college

in America for up to 2 years. We will pay the bill by lowering your taxes for how much your tuition costs if you will just go and be a good citizen, learn a lot, improve your skills, and make America stronger. We can revolutionize America if we do it.

Number three, I propose to give a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for the costs of all college tuition anywhere, undergraduate, graduate, you name it, for old, middle-aged, or the very youngest people. We need to educate America, and we can pay for this and still balance the budget. That's what we ought to do. Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century? *[Applause]*

I want to build a bridge to the 21st century where we keep growing jobs, 10½ million jobs in the last 4 years, record numbers of new small businesses, record exports. We have to keep doing that. We can do it if we balance the budget and continue to invest in education, technology, research, the environment, protecting Medicare and Medicaid. We can grow the economy. We can have a tax cut targeted to education and childrearing and medical expenses and buying that first home and not taxing people when they sell their homes on the gain they get from the sale and still balance the budget. We can do that. Will you help me do that and build that bridge to the 21st century? *[Applause]*

I want to finish the job of making our streets safer. Four years of declining crime, one million fewer crime victims in America—I want to keep going down. That means we've got to keep putting police on the streets of communities like this one. We've got to keep the safe and drug-free schools program and tell those in Congress who want to get rid of it and our support for the D.A.R.E. program and other things like it, we can't turn around. We've got to intensify our efforts here.

We've got to toughen our efforts to try to make our streets safer, but we also have to do things that give our young people things to say yes to, that give them hope: leaving our schools open later, giving them opportunities to work in the summer, improving the educational opportunities of kids that are in trouble, supporting AmeriCorps and giving more young people the chance to work their way through college and serve their communities and be good role models. Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century? *[Applause]*

We have to build a bridge to the 21st century that makes more communities stronger, like I see here today, starting with strong families. I am very proud of the fact that the first bill I signed was the family and medical leave law. And I might add, it really is a classic example of the differences between my opponent and his party and me. I signed it; he led the fight against it. I brag on it; he says we still made a mistake to sign it. Now, you be the judge.

Here's what the family and medical leave law does. It says quite simply, if you work in a business with 50 or more employees and you need a little time off from work because you or your wife is about to have a child—your spouse is about to have a child or because your child is sick or because you have a sick parent, you can take that time off and not lose your job, because we know you need to succeed at home and at work. That's what the law says.

Now, in 3½ years, 12 million times, American families have taken advantage of that law. Has it hurt us? No. We've got 10½ million more jobs. We've got record new businesses. We've got the healthiest small-business climate in history. We made every small business eligible for a tax cut if they invest more in their own business or if they invest in health insurance. We made it easier for them to take out retirement plans, but we said, look, people have to be able to succeed at raising their children and at work. That's our objective as Americans. I want more of that kind of policy for America. That's the difference between us and them. We know it takes a village. We know workers should also be good parents. We know raising children is the most important job of any society, and we want you to support our approach to that. Will you help us build that bridge to the 21st century? *[Applause]*

And finally, let me say, to echo what the Vice President said, we've got a cleaner environment than we had 4 years ago. The air is cleaner, drinking water standards have been raised, safety standards for food have been raised with the support, I might add, of farmers in Washington and others throughout the country. We have cleaned up more toxic waste dumps in 3 years than the previous administrations did in 12.

We have saved our national parks from an ill-advised scheme to sell some of them off. Just yesterday I announced 1.7 million acres of land being established as a national monument in

southern Utah, the Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument.

We just completed a plan to restore the salmon in the Columbia River. We just completed an agreement to protect the old-growth forest here, and timber jobs have increased, not decreased, in the last 4 years. Those who said that you couldn't protect the environment and maintain the strength of rural communities were wrong.

But finally, let me say, we still have some problems. This is an amazing thing. There are 10 million children living within 4 miles of a toxic waste dump. If you will give us 4 more years, we're going to clean up the two-thirds of those dumps that are the worst so we can say of all of our children, our kids are growing up next to parks, not poison. We want to preserve our environment and grow our economy. That's the way to build a bridge to the 21st century. Will you help us build that bridge? *[Applause]*

Will you work for us for 6 weeks and 5 days and talk to your friends and neighbors and make this a campaign of ideas, not name-calling and insults? Will you ask people to think about what they want America to look like when their children are their age and to vote for that kind of America? Let's take advantage of this season. Let's create a sense of community all over this country that our elections make a difference, our votes make a difference, and this time more than any election in a very long time, we are voting for the shape of the future and voting for our children.

I ask you, as we look at these children—there are some children back here that have "Centralia class of 2000." I want them to come up on this stage when I finish. I want you to look at them, and I want you to think about them every day between now and the election and remember that's what this is all about. We need your help.

Thank you for being here. God bless you. Stay with us. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. at the corner of Tower Street and Pine Street. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Peter Corwin of Centralia, and resident John Simpson, who introduced the President.