

Remarks in Longview, Washington September 19, 1996

The President. Thank you. Wow! Thank you way back there in the back. Can you hear? [Applause] Oh, thank you for waiting for us. Thank you for making us feel so welcome in this stunningly beautiful community. What a wonderful place you have to live.

I want to thank right here at the outset the people who have provided our music, the R.A. Long and Mark Morris High School bands. Thank you, bands, thank you. And the Checkers, thank you. And I understand that the R.A. Long football team is undefeated and down here somewhere. Congratulations! [Applause] Thank you.

I'd also like to say a special word of thanks to Axel Swanson, the student body president at R.A. Long. Now, you just think about it, he got up here in front of this big crowd, and unlike me, he doesn't do this all the time. And I thought he did a terrific job, and I was really proud of him. You know, when I was his age I had a chance to shake hands with President Kennedy. It made an impression on me I never forgot. But I was looking at him today, and I can tell you that today he looks a lot more like a future President than I did then. I liked it, and I hope he does very well. Congratulations, Axel.

I want to thank Brian Baird for presenting himself for Congress. Ladies and gentlemen, it's hard to run for Congress these days. It's a hard and arduous task. And much to my dismay, many of these races have become so intensely negative and so difficult—often difficult to get idealistic young people to present themselves. He has, and I am confident he would do a fine job representing you. I wish him well, and I hope you will wish him well and help him do well.

And to Gary Locke, let me say I was so impressed with the race that you and your other fellow Democrats ran in that primary. You won a hard-fought, clean, honest, progressive, forward-looking race. You can be proud of the race you just ran and the race you are now running. And I hope you folks will help to make Gary Locke the next Governor of the State of Washington, to keep moving forward into the 21st century.

You know, we've had a wonderful day today, and I know we're a little late, but you wouldn't believe the crowds we've seen all along the road and every place we've stopped. We began in Tacoma, where I believe we had over 25,000 people. We went to Roy and Yelm and Tenino and Centralia. And then of course we were just in Kelso, and we crossed the bridge—anybody here from Kelso? [Applause] You could have fooled me; I thought the whole town was along the highway back there. And I want to say to all of you, you cannot imagine what a source of encouragement it is to Hillary and Tipper and to Al and me to see you out here, loving your country, believing in its future, determined to play a role in its future.

Four years ago when I came to Washington State and the people of this State were so good in voting for me and giving me your electoral votes, I asked you to take us on faith. I had never worked in Washington, DC—the other Washington—before. I'd been a Governor for 12 years who ran for President because I didn't like what was happening to my country. I didn't like the high unemployment, the low job growth, the stagnant wages, the unaddressed social challenges. I didn't like the fact that we were growing more divided and that people were becoming ever more cynical about their political system. I didn't think we became the greatest country in the world and lasted for over 220 years by having those kind of problems and those kind of attitudes. And I wanted to change.

I wanted to lead this country into the 21st century with the American dream alive and well for every single American willing to work for it; with this country coming together, bridging our divisions and mutual respect, not dividing; and with our country still the strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity in the world. And I can tell you that after 4 years we're in better shape than we were 4 years ago and we're on the right track to the 21st century.

I welcome this debate with our opponents over the next 6 weeks and 5 days because it will be a clear picture of starkly different approaches. You could hardly find two different platforms, two different programs, two different

records that were more opposite in their views of what our purposes are as a people and what our role in Washington is. You see, we really do believe that it takes a village; we don't think you're on your own. Longview looks like a pretty good village to us. We think you help each other to make the most of your own lives. We really do believe we must build a bridge to the future; we can't build a bridge to the past. We really do believe that at this moment in history, if we do the rights things, if we build the right kind of bridge, we can make it possible for more people than ever before in history to live out their dreams and live up to their God-given potential. But we have to do the right things.

It is not an accident that the unemployment rate is down, that the deficit has been reduced by 60 percent, that we have an all-time high in exports from Washington State and the United States, that America's auto industry is number one again, that we have 10½ million jobs, that we have 10 million people about to get a pay increase when the minimum wage goes up on October 1st. That is not an accident. It is not an accident.

Finally, finally, we passed a meaningful piece of health care reform that says if you have to change jobs or if someone in your family gets sick, you still can't be denied health insurance. It's long past time when we should have done that.

It is not an accident that we made every small business in America eligible to get a tax cut if they invest more in their business to hire more people, to grow the business, to make America stronger, if they take out health insurance. We made it easier for them to take out retirement and to protect their own retirement and their employees' when they move from job to job. That didn't happen by accident.

It's not an accident that 40 million American retirees and workers have more secure pensions than they did 4 years ago. It's not an accident that tens of millions of us are breathing cleaner air, that we have safer drinking water standards, higher standards for food safety, that we have saved the national parks from an ill-advised attempt to sell some of them off, that this environment is cleaner, that we've cleaned up more toxic waste sites in 3 years than were cleaned up in the previous 12. None of that is an accident. It happened because we changed the direction of this country, and we're on the right track to the 21st century.

It is not an accident that the crime rate has gone down for 4 years in a row. It is not an accident that finally juvenile crime has started to go down. It is not an accident that the welfare rolls have gone down by 1.8 million, that child support collections have gone up by 40 percent, and that there are one million fewer crime victims in the United States today. That is not an accident. It happened because we worked together—together—to create the conditions and to give you the tools to make the most of your own lives. And now we have to finish building that bridge to the 21st century.

I came here today to tell you that if you will work with us for 6 weeks and 5 days, if you'll talk to your friends, your neighbors, your family members, your coworkers and you'll help us build that bridge, then we'll give you 4 years in which we will roar into the 21st century with opportunity, responsibility, and a stronger American community alive for all the people of this country. Will you help us build the bridge? [Applause]

My fellow Americans, I want to build a bridge to the 21st century in which we have the finest education system in the world and every classroom in every school in America is hooked up to the information superhighway, to the Internet, to the World Wide Web. And if you're not a computer expert, I'll tell you what it means. It means for the first time in history, 4 years from now, if we do our jobs, the children in the most remote rural school districts, the children in the poorest inner-city school districts, the children in the small towns and the rich towns and the middle class towns, all of our kids, for the first time ever will have access to the same learning in the same time at the same level of quality for the first time ever. Will you help us do that? [Applause]

I want to build a bridge to the 21st century in which we make college educations available to all Americans who want to go whether they're young or middle aged or older. If they need to go back and get more education, they ought to be able to do it. And I want to do it in three ways.

First, more people saving more with IRA's and then you can withdraw from them without any tax penalty if you're going to use it to educate yourselves or your children or deal with health care or buy a first-time home.

Second, we want to make 2 years of education after high school as universal in 4 years from

now as a high school diploma is today. Every American, we know now, needs more education. And here's how we're going to do that. We're going to let you deduct from your tax bill dollar for dollar the cost of the average tuition at the typical community college in the United States—just take it off your taxes, go back to community college, get that degree, move this country forward.

Third, we want to give you a deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of tuition at any college anyplace in this country, whether it's undergraduate school, graduate school, a special program, you name it. If you have to go back and get more education and training to do better with your lives, even if you've been out of school for years, you ought to be able to do it. And we'll support you in doing it.

The second thing I want to do is to keep this economy going. We can have tax cuts, my fellow Americans, but they have to be paid for and they ought to be targeted to education, to childrearing, to buying that first-time home, to dealing with medical emergencies. You ought not to have to pay a tax if you sell your home and you've got a gain on it because it's appreciated in value over time. But we ought to pay for those things.

We have to continue our work to balance the budget. Why? Because we have brought the deficit down by 60 percent. That may not mean much to you. Every time I leave Washington, some political expert says, "Now, Mr. President, don't go out there in the country and start talking about reducing the deficit. People only care about it when the economy is in the tank. When the economy is doing well, it bores them to tears."

Here's why you shouldn't be bored. If we bring the deficit down and we borrow less money just to pay the Government's bills, then interest rates go down. For you that means a lower home mortgage payment, a lower care payment, a lower credit card payment. For business it means lower loan rates, which means they can borrow more money, hire more people, grow this economy, and take us into the 21st century. We have to balance the budget. We have to do it.

We can't have a tax cut so big we undermine the economic recovery of the country. What good would it do you to see this deficit blown up? You get a tax cut on one hand and turn around and have it taken away on the other

hand with a higher mortgage payment, a higher credit card payment, a higher car payment, and fewer jobs in America. We've got to keep this economy growing until everybody that wants a good job has one. We need to keep going. Will you help us build that bridge to the 21st century? *[Applause]*

I want you to help us build a bridge to the 21st century where we have security for people. We have to continue to bring the crime rate down. I am proud of the fact it's come down 4 years in a row. And I can't help but noting that right here in Washington State, a lot of congressional districts changed hands and went to the other party in 1994 because the people in the other party came out to small towns and rural areas in Washington, and they said, "The President and his party voted for that awful crime bill, and they're going to take your guns away."

[At this point, an audience member required medical attention.]

The President. You need a doctor over there? Send a medic over there, right back there. We'll be right there. Just keep your hands held up. We've got the doctor back there, right back there.

Now, remember this—in 1994, I remember them. I remember them going into all these little towns and saying, "Why, the President voted to take your gun away, the Democrats in Congress did. That crime bill is terrible. It's not going to do anything to bring down crime."

Well, now we know. Four years later, we have 4 years of a declining crime rate. We're halfway home in putting 100,000 police on the street. We didn't take a single hunter's rifle away from him in Washington State or my home State of Arkansas. Everybody's still going into the woods with the same weapons they had. But 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers lost their right to buy a handgun under the Brady bill. We were right; they were wrong. They were wrong about that.

And we need to keep going. We should oppose their efforts to cut short the 100,000 police commitment. When you put more police officers on the street, knowing the neighbors of the people, getting to know the kids, encouraging young people to stay off drugs and out of gangs and out of trouble—when people work in partnership, they can drop the crime rate dramatically. I have been to community after community after

community where people gave up on it but where the streets are now safe. And I don't want to stop until every American feels safe in their homes, on their streets, in their schools, in their places of work. We can do this. And I want you to help me build that bridge to the 21st century.

Let me also say that in every election people always talk about family values. Well, our administration has tried to value families. Tipper Gore has worked for 20 years to try to create conditions in which people could raise children without having them subject to destructive influences from our larger culture. The First Lady has worked for over 20 years to try to help improve the conditions of childrearing and health care for our young children.

We were the first administration in history that took on the tobacco industry and said it is illegal to sell cigarettes to young people—no more advertising, marketing, and sales to them. It is wrong.

The first bill I signed was the family and medical leave law. It said simply you can't be fired if you have to take a little time off for the birth of a child or the illness of a child or a parent. Now, this is a classic example of our differences. My opponent led the fight against that law. He says today, we made a terrible mistake to pass it, that it was antibusiness. Well, if it was antibusiness, how come we got 10½ million more jobs and record numbers of new small businesses? It wasn't antibusiness. People do better at work if they know they're doing right by their kids at home. That's what I mean by a village, a bridge we can all walk across.

And I'd like to see the family and medical leave law expanded just a little bit to say that people shouldn't lose their jobs either—they

ought to have a little time off to go to regular conferences with their children's teachers and to be able to take their kids and their parents to the doctor when they need to go. It will make us stronger. It will be a good thing for the economy.

The last thing I want to say is the Vice President and I worked very hard to prove that you could grow the economy and preserve the environment and that in the end you can't grow the economy unless you preserve the environment. I told you a few minutes ago we cleaned up a lot of toxic waste dumps. That's the good news. The bad news is 10 million American children still live within 4 miles of a toxic waste site. If you give us 4 more years, we'll get rid of the two-thirds worst ones, 500 of them, so we can say America's children are growing up next to parks like this, not next to poison. That's a big part of our bridge to the 21st century.

Now, I want to ask you again, I want you to take the next 6 weeks and 5 days, go out to your friends and neighbors, without regard to their party, and say, let's have a talk about what we want America to look like in the 21st century. Let's have a talk about what we want America to look like when our children are our age. Let's have a talk about this election because we're electing the last President of the 20th century and the first President of the 21st century. And let's have a talk about how we can build that bridge big enough, wide enough, and strong enough so we can all go marching across it together to the best days America has ever had.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:40 p.m. at Sacajawea Park. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Message to the Congress Reporting on the National Emergency With Respect to Angola (UNITA)

September 19, 1996

To the Congress of the United States:

I hereby report to the Congress on the developments since March 25, 1996, concerning the national emergency with respect to Angola that was declared in Executive Order 12865 of Sep-

tember 26, 1993. This report is submitted pursuant to section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c).