

ing progress—[laughter]—and I feel good about that. Not everybody can make up 80 years in 2 weeks, and I'm proud, you know. [Laughter] But he was right in February. In February he said we had the best economy we've had in 30 years, and he was right when he said that. And I don't deserve all the credit for that. No one does. But our policies have helped you to create those jobs. And we are working together. And that's my whole theory of how this country should work. And I'll just leave you with that.

No matter what vision you have for the future, one of the things that I know in my bones is that the great meal ticket America has to the 21st century—which will clearly be the time of greatest human possibility ever known, where more people will have more chances to live out their dreams than any time in history, where the young people that are in this audience will be doing jobs that haven't been invented yet, many of them will be doing work that has not even been imagined yet—our great ticket to that 21st century is our vibrant democracy, our vibrant free enterprise system, and the fact that in America we can say, we will take anybody from anywhere who is here lawfully.

We don't have to know much about you—if you were born in Mexico of Syrian descent, or we don't need to know how much Cherokee Indian blood you have in you. We don't need

to know anything about you except that you believe in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence, and you're willing to show up for work or school or do whatever you're supposed to do tomorrow. We need to know nothing else. We're not going to be like Bosnia. We're not going to be consumed by religious hatred as they are in the Middle East. We're not going to be fighting battles 300 and 600 years old, as my ancestors' people are in Ireland. We're not going to do that in America.

And when people try to do it, when they blow up Federal buildings or burn churches or desecrate synagogues or Islamic centers, we're going to say, we are against that because our America has everybody in it. And we're going to build a bridge to the future together.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:05 p.m. at Bowen Field House. In his remarks, he referred to Irma B. Elder, owner, Troy Ford; Juanita Bycraft Walker, owner, Production Cleaning Co., Inc.; Gail Davis, president, KDY Enterprise, Inc.; Juanita M. Reid, vice president for university relations, Eastern Michigan University; and former Senator Donald W. Riegle, Jr., and his wife, Lori Hansen Riegle. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks to Colorado Democrats in Denver, Colorado

October 30, 1996

Thank you. Thank you very much. Mr. Mayor, Mrs. Webb, Governor Romer, Congressman Fields, Chairperson Vivian Stovall, and Mike Beatty, my old friend Norm Early—I'm glad to see him again. And I want to say a special word on behalf of Diana DeGette, who's trying to make sure that we have a different leadership in the House of Representatives and for the Congress.

I'd also like to say a word for our Senate nominee, Tom Strickland, who is, as you know, going to another one of his debates with Mr. Allard. And you have to be thinking about him. You're going to be enjoying a dinner, and he won't be able to eat. [Laughter] But I think

he'll represent us well, and I hope you will help him prevail on election day.

Let me also say, if you have never heard Cleo Fields give a speech, when I finish you will have not heard the best speaker tonight on the platform. And I want to thank him. He comes from my neighboring State of Louisiana; I was elated when he was elected to Congress. I was downhearted when he was redistricted by a court. And I think he has a brilliant future ahead of him, and I'm glad he's here with you. Ron Brown would be glad he is here with you tonight.

I would like to talk a little history with you tonight, just to bring you to this point so soon, so near to our election. First, I thank you for

naming these awards for Ron Brown and Barbara Jordan. They were both friends of mine and my relationship with each of them, though different, is something I will treasure all of my life.

I too remember the first time I ever heard Barbara Jordan speak, and I thought, maybe God is a woman after all. [Laughter] I always—I got to where I wanted to say “yes, ma’am” before she ever opened her mouth, every time I was ever around her. [Laughter]

She never lost her love for this country, and the more her body became weakened by her condition, the stronger her heart and voice became. And in her last year she agreed to chair for me a commission looking at what we should do about the issues of immigration in our country, how we could remain a nation of immigrants and still take a strong stand that people who come here should do so legally. And she did it with a grace, a strength, a balance, a fundamental sense of fairness and common sense that everyone who worked with her marveled about. And that was her last great contribution to our Nation. And I’ve done my best to implement the ideas that Barbara Jordan advanced. And I’ll always be grateful to her.

And all of you know, of course, of my relationship with Ron Brown. I doubt very seriously that I’d be standing here as President of the United States tonight if it hadn’t been for Ron Brown. And so I’m going to keep him smiling from up there the next week. I’m going to do everything I can to keep that big smile on his face.

I also want to thank you for honoring Wellington and Wilma Webb. I not only like them very much, but I admire them very much. And Hillary and I identify with them. We love being around them. And I like seeing a strong first lady, and I like seeing a mayor who is strong enough to want to be married to a strong first lady—[laughter]—and I like that.

So I thank you for that. And let me say that Colorado has—I’ve been coming here a lot for the last 15 years, a long time before I ever thought I’d be here as President. I came every chance I could because it represented something very special to me. And I think you’ve been blessed by the quality of your leaders. Roy Romer I think is clearly, both in terms of accomplishment and intellect and vision of the future, the most gifted Governor in the United States in terms of his contribution to our future.

And he’s like all of us aging warriors. He was reluctant to give up on his youth, so he broke his leg on a motorcycle and—[laughter]—he’s left his cane, and he’s kind of trading up his shoes gradually, you know. [Laughter] But I am delighted to be here with all of them.

This election we’re going to have will elect the last President of the 20th century and the first President of the 21st century. Colorado sort of embodies both the promise and the struggles of the present and the future. And I was thinking when Mayor Webb was talking about Abraham Lincoln and the long talks we had about Lincoln when he was staying in the White House that the great thing about America is that there’s always been a relentless quest for a better future in a way that would embrace the moment and, in doing so, not abandon our traditional values and ideals but instead try to perfect them.

A lot of people have this idea that, well, if you were really a future-oriented person, it means you’re too material or you’re too concerned about ideas, and that’s very exciting, but you must be a little shy on the traditional ideals and values that have kept our country strong. But I don’t see it that way at all. I think that our expanding abundance only gives us the opportunity which we then have to seize to live up more closely to our ideals and our values.

And this period that we’re living in now involves such a remarkable change in the way people are living and working, relating to each other, the way we’re relating to the rest of the world, that it has only basically one parallel in American history: 100 years ago—very interesting—when we moved from the farm to the factory, when we moved from the country to the city, when we then had our first big wave of immigrants coming in. And because we did not put aside our racial bigotry after the Civil War, even though we stayed together as a country and we abolished slavery legally and we adopted the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments and we began to move forward, we still were a country that said one thing and did another.

All of us are like that still, you know. [Laughter] Every one of us had a parent at one moment in a lapse said, “Well, I still want you to do what I say, not what I do.” But what happened was, those immigrants, when they came in here 100 years ago, they felt terrible prejudice, the Italians, the Irish, the Poles. And then we had the Red Scare, and then we had

the Ku Klux Klan rise up in America; no more than 50 years after the Civil War they were hanging black people again in the South where I grew up.

Because of the civil rights struggle and because of the progress which has been made, even though we're a long way from where we ought to be in the relationships between African-Americans and the white majority, we have a chance to deal with this new infusion of immigrants and all the new explosion of diversity of all kinds in our country in a different way than we did 100 years ago and to take advantage of all these technological and other changes to move closer to our ideals.

We also have a chance—it's very important to Coloradans—to take advantage of these new exploding economic opportunities in a way that preserves and indeed enhances our environment instead of undermining it, which is what happened 100 years ago.

So this is a time of enormous possibility. And it's very important that we not be distracted from the big issues here. There are two great, different philosophies at stake in this election. One of them basically says that the main thing about America is that everybody came over here to get a good letting-alone, and that's true. Our Constitution was constructed to limit the ability of Government to oppress people. But one of the things we've learned over the last 100 years is, in the world we're living in and in the world we're going to, as Wellington said, none of us get there by ourselves.

You know, I was thinking of Wellington's story—I was raised by—I was born to a widowed mother, and my stepfather didn't graduate from high school. And it's inconceivable, I think, to a lot of my kinfolks at home that I ever turned out to be President. [Laughter] But I know one thing: If I had been born black instead of white, I wouldn't be President. I know that. But I know we're closer to the time when anybody can run for President, fulfilling the Constitution's requirements, and be considered on his or her own merits. We're closer.

And so I still believe that the Government in many areas of private life—choice, religion, many other areas—should let people, as long as they're not hurting other people, make their own decisions and go forward. One of the proudest moments of my Presidency was signing the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. And most of you probably don't even know I signed

it because there was no fight about, and if there's not a fight in Washington, it doesn't get on the news in Denver. [Laughter] It passed unanimously. And then we have vigorously enforced it, including in a controversial case out here in Colorado where—every case I have bent over backwards to make sure that we never interfere with any person's exercise of his or her religious convictions, whatever they are, unless it's really going to threaten to bring the Government down or something terrible.

And so, here we are at this moment, and I think what we've learned is, yes, we should guarantee, first and foremost, the individual liberty of people; but to guarantee their security and to give them all the same chance—not a guarantee but a chance in life—there are some things we have to do together. And it is the difference of opinion over how much we should do together and what we should do together that this election is all about.

It is not about big Government. Our administration has reduced the size of Government, the number of regulations, the number of Government programs eliminated, and we have privatized more Government operations than the previous two Republican administrations combined. If they had this record, they would be saying it's the greatest thing since sliced bread.

But what I have not been willing to do is to see us walk away from our common obligations to give all of our people educational opportunities; to give health care to poor children, to families with disabilities, to the elderly in nursing homes; to preserve the gains of Medicare, even as we reform the system; and to protect the environment and to continue our investment in research and in technology in our endless quest to move into the future so more people can live closer to what we all say we believe.

That's what this election is about, whether you think we're better off being told, "You're on your own, and we hope you make it," or whether we think it does take a village to raise our children and build a country. That's what this election is about.

It's about whether we're going to build a bridge to the 21st century that's big enough and wide enough for all of us to walk across, and then whether we're going to have in our hearts the capacity to say, "If you believe in the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution and you're willing

to show up for work tomorrow—or, if you're of that age, to show up for school tomorrow—if you're willing to do your job as an American, we don't need to know anything else about you, nothing. Nothing else matters. You're part of our America, and we're willing to walk hand in hand with you across that bridge into the future."

Now, that is what the election is about. I was reading today an amusing—I thought it was amusing—an article in a magazine about my judicial appointments, because they pointed out that one of the things that has not been discussed much in the election is the fact that the next President may well get to make a couple more appointments to the Supreme Court. And they were saying that the previous administration imposed—two administrations—imposed strict ideological litmus tests on a lot of judges and that a lot of my supporters were disappointed that I didn't turn around and do exactly the same thing on the other end, but instead I had insisted on two things, excellence and diversity.

And they pointed out that I had appointed more African-Americans, more Hispanics, more Asian-Americans, and more women to the Federal bench than any President in history and that, in spite of that, we had the highest ratings from the American Bar Association for excellence of any judicial selections in the history of the country since they've been doing that.

I think if you have a Federal bench that reflects the vast experiences of America, with people that are smart enough to figure out the issues that are put before them and they share the experiences of America in all of its permutations, chances are pretty good that they'll do what they ought to do. And judges aren't like Presidents or Congressmen, but they should reflect America.

I say all that to make this point. Every election time the election is always decided by those who vote and by those who don't. And the people that have the biggest stake in whether we build a bridge that we can all walk across together—in whether we adopt my education agenda, which is to expand Head Start; to teach every 8-year-old to read a book independently; to have every classroom in the country, even in the poorest school districts, in the most remote rural districts, hooked up to the information superhighway by the year 2000; to make 2 years of college as universal as high school

is today by giving people a tax credit, a dollar-for-dollar reduction on their tax bill of up to \$1,500 a year, the cost of a typical community college education; to give every family a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 for any college tuition, undergraduate or graduate, for people of any age; to let families save in an IRA and withdraw from it tax-free if the money is used for education or buying a first home or a medical emergency—that agenda, if you embrace that, it means that you think we have a common obligation to help each other live up to the fullest of our abilities and that we'll all be better off if we all have a chance to do well.

If you support my agenda—that I think we have a common obligation to eliminate discrimination of all kinds in the workplace; to protect the environment; to continue to try to expand coverage of health care step by step to people, so that people who work have a chance to buy health care—you have to believe that it's because we're all going to be better off if we live closer to what we say we believe and we give everybody else a chance to do the same. That's what the election is about.

And the people that have the most at stake are the ones that will have the best excuse not to vote. How many mothers do we know out there raising two or three kids, working two jobs, having to figure out, "I've got to figure out how to vote on a workday, and I've got to get my kids somewhere before I go to work, and what's going to happen to them after school, and I don't have enough money for child care, and what have I got to do tonight?" All the people that may have the biggest stake in this election may have the best excuse—not a reason but it's a pretty good excuse—because their lives will be crowded with other things.

And maybe they have or haven't felt it, but it makes a difference. Ten million more Americans got an increase in the minimum wage. The average income is up \$1,600 for the typical family in the last 2 years after 20 years of wage stagnation. Last month we found out—or just 2 weeks ago we found out that we had the biggest decline in income inequality among working people in 27 years, since this administration came in; the biggest drop in childhood poverty in 20 years; the biggest drop in poverty in female-headed households in 30 years; the lowest recorded poverty levels ever for senior citizens and African-Americans; the largest number of new businesses owned by minorities and

women in the history of the country; the largest number of new small businesses owned by anybody in the history of the country. It makes a difference. It makes a difference.

So it makes a difference what policies we pursue, and it will change people's lives here. And so I ask you to go out and help our Senate candidate, help Diana DeGette, help Bill Clinton and Al Gore, not as a matter of party, now, but because it has fallen to our party to embrace a philosophy that the other party embraced briefly under Abraham Lincoln, that they embraced briefly under Theodore Roosevelt, but that they have abandoned. And so it has fallen to us to carry this banner, not as a matter of party but as a matter of carrying on the great American experiment in a way that will truly realize the era of greatest possibility ever known.

I honestly believe these kids here in this audience, they'll be doing things in 10 or 15 years we couldn't even dream of. They'll be doing jobs that haven't been invented; some of them will be doing jobs that haven't been imagined. It's all out there. But we have to make the right decisions. And as much as anything else, that's why I have fought so hard not only to make the right governmental decisions but to say the right things as your President when the hatred of the Government led a demented person to blow up a Federal building in Oklahoma City—allegedly; they haven't been tried yet, and we can't presume anybody's guilt. But we know that Government hatred has led people into bands of folks that are paranoid that terrible things are going to happen to them. I had to speak against that.

When the black churches are being burned or white churches are being burned or synagogues are being defaced or Islamic centers are being defaced, that's not our America. But that is the dominant theme of life that caused people to slaughter each other's children in Bosnia. And it still bedevils Northern Ireland; they're still arguing over things—they're my ancestors, you know, and they're my relatives now, so I can talk about them. They're still fighting over things that happened 300 years ago and battles that occurred 600 years ago, when all the kids want to do is to let it go and go on into the future. In the Middle East, where I have worked so hard, the Holy Land for the three great monotheistic religions in the world—if anyplace in the world ought to be a peaceful sanctuary for Jews and Muslims and Christians, it ought to

be the Holy Land. But so many of them just can't let it go.

And we're going to beat all that if we do the right things. When Hillary and Chelsea and I went to open the Olympics and I looked at those people—we had people from 197 different racial and ethnic groups. Almost every single one of them had people in America. And that's because we're not about race or religion or anything else. We're about these ideas and trying every, every, every age to live up closer to them.

This is a very historic election, not because of me but because of what's happening to us. And we go through periods of huge change like this only rarely. And that's a good thing, because nobody can change—you know, any of us can just stand so much change at once. One of my laws of politics: We're all for change in general, but we're against it in particular. *[Laughter]* Or as one of my friends said, "Yes, I agree with you, we ought to change. You go first." *[Laughter]*

So this is our responsibility. Now, you know what to do, and you know how to do it. And if Ron Brown were here giving a speech tonight, that's all he'd be talking about. That's all he'd be talking about. And Barbara Jordan, if she were here, she'd make you feel so guilty you wouldn't sleep between now and Tuesday—*[laughter]*—until you dragged every human being you knew to the polls. Now, you know that.

So I want you to think about that. And I want you to understand that you carry with you the great burden and opportunity of American history. Every one of us should be grateful to be alive at this time, should be grateful to have this moment in which we have a chance to further break down the walls of discrimination in our minds and hearts, explode opportunity for all Americans, and that these changes that are going on give us this incredible opportunity to really actually enhance the natural environment God has given us and leave it stronger and better for our children and grandchildren, even as we prosper.

That's what I want you to think about. I want you to think about, Tuesday morning when you get up, that bridge to tomorrow, and how you wouldn't let your child have to go down deep valleys and cross rushing rivers and climb big mountains if they could just get on a bridge and walk straight across. And that's what I want for everybody. And in order to do it, we've

got to show up. You know what to do. You know how to do it. Your country needs you. I know you'll be there.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:20 p.m. at the Red Lion Inn to the Colorado Democratic Coordinated Campaign and the African-American Initiative of Colorado Democrats. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Wellington Webb of Denver

and his wife, Wilma; Representative Cleo Fields of Louisiana; Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado; Vivian Stovall, chair, African-American Initiative of the Colorado Democrats; Mike Beatty, chair, Colorado Democratic Party; Norm Early, former Denver district attorney; Diana DeGette, candidate for Colorado's First Congressional District; Colorado senatorial candidate Tom Strickland; and Representative Wayne Allard of Colorado.

Remarks to the Community in Denver *October 30, 1996*

The President. Thank you. Thank you. Wow! Hello, Denver! Can you keep this up until Tuesday? [Applause] Let's give Katherine Diamond another hand. She was fabulous. Thank you very much. [Applause]

Thank you, Governor Romer, for your friendship and your leadership. I said the other day and I said just a few moments ago at another event, I think if you took an honest poll among all the Governors in this country, they would tell you, by reason of intellect, vision, and accomplishment, Roy Romer is the most outstanding public servant in the Governor's office in America today.

Thank you, Mayor Webb, and thank you for writing him in, because he's a great mayor, and I'm honored to be his friend.

Thank you, Diana DeGette, for being willing to go to Congress, and thank you for sending her. We need her there. Congressman Skaggs, thank you for being here. Lieutenant Governor Schoettler, Bess Strickland, thank you for being here. Tom's over at another one of those debates he's having, and I bet he's winning. But you have to help him win on Tuesday. Will you do that? [Applause]

I want to thank Shawn Kelley and Richie Sambora and the Samples for their music. I want to thank the Denver Broncos who came here tonight and wish them well on the rest of a great season. And I want to thank Mark Jackson for being here tonight. We could use a few of his moves between now and Tuesday. Give Mark Jackson a hand. He's a great player and a great citizen. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Bill Ritter for his support

of our anticrime initiatives and ask you for his support.

Folks, in 1992, when Al Gore and I came here and we asked the people of Colorado to support us, I felt a special kinship to this State, which I had been visiting for many years as a private citizen. And I always felt that Colorado represented all the cauldron of things that are happening in America a little bit ahead of time, that you were on the cutting edge of the future, that you were embracing the future, but that you were also dealing with the conflicts that bedevil us all and that threaten to divide us and take us back.

I always felt that here people had a good old-fashioned conservative sense that there were some things the Government ought not to do and mess with, and that that gave some of our opponents on the other side an unusual and often unfair advantage in the rhetoric of these elections. And I told you that if you gave us a chance to serve, I would pursue my vision for the 21st century with a simple strategy. I want us to go into that next century 4 years from now with the American dream alive and well for every person who's responsible to work for it.

I want us to continue to lead the world for peace and freedom and prosperity. And I've had to make some decisions I know were unpopular at the time to stand up for those ideals in Bosnia and Haiti, to keep working in the Middle East and Northern Ireland. But we are standing up for peace and freedom, and there's not a single Russian missile pointed at an American child tonight in part because of what we are doing.