

*Mr. Kittle.* Mr. President, in closing, would you like to go back to that sample math question, give us the answer, and explain how the United States students are compared to students in other countries?

*The President.* I think that means we're out of time. [Laughter]

Let me tell you what we always do at these town meetings. I love these. I have not done one in a couple years, but if any of you have questions that you would like to have answered, if you will provide them to the superintendent here, he'll load them all up, send them to me, and I'll write you back, because I think if you come here with a question, you're entitled to get an answer. I wish we had more time.

But let's do the question, let's go back to this. Here's the eighth grade question, okay. If the car has a fuel tank that holds 15 gallons, and it uses 5 gallons every 100 miles, and it goes 250 miles, obviously it uses  $12\frac{1}{2}$  gallons of fuel and there is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  gallons left, and that was question A.

But here is the stunning thing. Let's look at the results. Let's go to the next slide. Only 34 percent of American eighth graders got that question right. Fifty percent of Korean eighth graders got it right. Seventy percent of eighth

graders in Singapore got it right. So if you lengthen the school year, maybe you should work on specific math skills.

This has nothing to do with IQ. Nearly 100 percent of all the brains in the world will process this problem. Do not worry about whether we can do this. This is not an issue of whether we can achieve this level of excellence. We can easily do this. We just haven't.

And when we deprive our children of the capacity to do this, then there are all kinds of other processes that they can't absorb, and it blunts their capacity to learn later. So I want to see that number up at about 90, and the only way to do it is to try and to test it. And we can do it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:12 p.m. in the gymnasium at Robert C. Byrd High School. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Helen Shields, senior at Robert C. Byrd High School, who introduced the President; Robert Kittle, superintendent, Harrison County schools; Gov. Cecil H. Underwood of West Virginia, and his wife, Hovah; Gaston Caperton, former West Virginia Governor; and Mayor Robert T. Flynn of Clarksburg.

## Remarks to High School Students in Clarksburg

May 22, 1997

*The President.* Thank you very much. Well, did you see it?

*Audience members.* Yes!

*The President.* On the screen and the Internet?

*Audience members.* Yes!

*The President.* Well, you may have had the better deal, because it's cooler in here. [Laughter] Let me thank Danny Phares for his introduction. And I want to say I'm glad to be here with Governor Underwood and with Secretary of Education Dick Riley and with Cleo Mathews, the president of the State board of education. And you may have heard me say that her daughter, Sylvia, who is here today, is my Deputy Chief of Staff in the White House and she graduated from high school in Hinton, West Virginia.

So I think that's a pretty good statement of West Virginia's education quality. And I have to tell you, I did not have an auditorium this nice when I was in high school. I love this school. Congratulations on having a beautiful, beautiful school.

You heard the townhall meeting—I'm just going to come down here and shake hands with anybody who wants to come down and say hello. But I just want to say one thing to all of you. We are about to enter not only a new century but a new millennium, literally a time which happens once every thousand years. By coincidence, you are also entering a period in our history which will be very different from the past, different in the way people work, different in the way people learn, different in the way people relate to each other. And it can be the

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greatest moment of human promise in all history. It may be, if we do everything as we should, that young people your age and those coming along behind you will have more opportunities to live their dreams than any group of people who ever lived.

But none of this will happen unless we continue to put top priority on education, continue to believe that all young people can learn, and continue to be dedicated to the proposition that everybody should have a maximum opportunity to learn as much as possible. So when you leave

this high school, I hope you will keep that conviction with you for the rest of your lives and be dedicated to the proposition that not only you but all the young people coming behind you should have those opportunities.

Thank you. God bless you, and good luck.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. in the theater at Robert C. Byrd High School. In his remarks, he referred to Danny Phares, student body president.

## Remarks to the Clarksburg Area Community in Bridgeport, West Virginia *May 22, 1997*

Thank you, West Virginia. Thank you for coming out today. It's wonderful; thank you. I want to thank Governor Underwood and my former colleague and good friend Governor Caperton, Mayor Furbee, Mayor Flynn, Secretary of State Hechler, Attorney General McGraw, Treasurer Perdue, Auditor Gainer, your Agriculture Secretary Douglass, and to the speaker of the house, the president of the senate, the majority leader of the senate, and all of the people who are here who made my stay in West Virginia so wonderful today.

I have to tell you, I have had a terrific time. The townhall meeting on education we had at Robert Byrd High School was a wonderful testament to the dedication to education and excellence and opportunity for every child of the people of West Virginia. And I hope all of you get a chance to see the program and that you're as proud of the people from your State as I was today when we did it. It was an amazing event, and we thank you.

I'd also like to thank Mary Frances Smith for singing the national anthem. I thank the ROTC unit and the band from Robert Byrd High School, thank you; the Lincoln High School Young Professionals; and all the others who came here today to make this rally a success.

Ladies and gentlemen, I will be very brief. I want to take a little time to get out here and shake a few more hands. But I came here today with a simple message. First, I want to thank the people of West Virginia for twice plac-

ing their confidence in me in giving me the chance to serve as President of the United States.

Second, I want to say that our country is moving in the right direction. And we can be proud of that, but we have more to do. If you compare where we are now to where we were 4 years ago, we have a record 12 million new jobs and, nationally, the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, and the biggest decline in inequality among working Americans in more than 30 years. I'm proud of that, and you should be too.

The crime rate has been going down every year. The welfare rolls have dropped by the largest amount in 50 years in the last 4 years. We are moving in the right direction, and we're coming together as a country. But you and I know that in the world we're moving into, where information travels around the world in the flash of a second, where the borders of countries no longer can protect us from common problems like terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and no longer can keep us from opportunities unimagined just a few years ago—we know that if West Virginia, if every little hill and hollow in this State and every child growing up in this State is going to have an opportunity to make the most of the 21st century, a new century in a whole new millennium, it will depend more than anything else on whether we can give every child in West Virginia a world class education, on whether every 8-year-old can