

May 22 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997

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

read well, every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old, without regard to their family's income, who's willing to work for it, can go on to college, every single one of them who wants to go. It will depend upon whether every adult can keep on learning for a lifetime.

These are the things that are driving my administration in these 4 years. We are about to conclude debate in the Senate today on a balanced budget amendment that will give our country the first balanced budget we've had since the 1960's. And it's high time, and I'm proud of it. But I want to say to you that the deficit has already been cut by more than 75 percent, thanks to the work that Senator Byrd and Senator Rockefeller, Congressman Mollohan and Congressman Rahall did back in 1993. Now, we're going to finish the job, and we're also going to increase our investment in education, even as we cut the deficit, because we want to fix the deficit today but fix the future of the young people of this country and this State for tomorrow.

So let me say, today I was deeply touched—the drive from here to the high school—to see all the people along the way. I stopped a couple of times to say hello to the children coming back and it made us a little late and I hope you'll forgive us. But there were thousands of

people along the way, all of you here—it makes me very happy personally, but more than that, as your President, it makes me happy to see you supporting the future of this country and the future of our children.

So I ask you this. You gave me a chance to serve again; now let's get behind a common goal: to raise our standards to the highest in the world in education and to believe that every one of our children can learn and to commit ourselves to a future more brilliant than our glorious past and to know that the way we're going to do it is one child at a time. I'll do my part. You do yours, and we'll all be celebrating when 2000 rolls around.

God bless you, and thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:05 p.m. at Benedum Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gaston Caperton, former West Virginia Governor; Mayor Carl E. Furbee of Bridgeport; Mayor Robert T. Flynn of Clarksburg; West Virginia Secretary of State Ken Hechler; State Attorney General Darrell McGraw, Jr.; State Treasurer John Perdue; State Auditor Glen Gainer III; State Agriculture Secretary Gus Douglass; Speaker of the House of Delegates Robert Kiss; State Senate President Earl Ray Tomblin; State Senate Majority Leader H. Truman Chafin; and Mary Frances Smith, who sang the national anthem.

Statement on Supplemental Emergency Legislation for Disaster Assistance *May 22, 1997*

I urge the Congress not to leave for Memorial Day recess without sending me a clean emergency supplemental bill that provides the disaster assistance upon which hundreds of thousands of Americans are depending. The people of 33 States are waiting for the Congress to act. In

recent weeks, we have witnessed extraordinary destruction in the Dakotas and Minnesota matched only by the courage with which residents of these States have faced their plight. The Congress owes it to them to pass a clean bill and send it to me for my signature.

The President's Radio Address *May 24, 1997*

Good morning. This past week, the House and the Senate voted by overwhelming bipartisan majorities to endorse an historic, bipartisan

agreement to balance the Federal budget by