

Remarks at the New England Presidential Luncheon in Boston,
Massachusetts
June 30, 1997

Thank you. This is a pretty rowdy group today. *[Laughter]* And if you weren't rowdy before Senator Kennedy talked, you must be now. *[Laughter]*

Let me say to the mayor, to Senator Kerry, Senator Kennedy, to all the Members of the Congress that I have been with today, the State officials, Steve Grossman, Alan Solomont, Governor Mike Dukakis and Kitty, who are here, and all of you—Joan Menard—I've probably forgotten somebody behind me; I'm testing my memory, which is deteriorating rapidly here. *[Laughter]* I'm delighted to be back in Boston, and I'm glad to have the chance to say again, thank you for being the number one State in America in the support for Bill Clinton and Al Gore in 1996. I'm very grateful to you all. Thank you.

Thank you for being here for us in 1995, when everyone said that the days of our administration were numbered, the Democratic Party was on the downhill. You know all that stuff they said. You were right, and they were wrong, and I thank you for that.

But most importantly, I thank you because you have helped us to prove that it's good for America to give opportunity to everybody who's responsible enough to work for it. You've helped us to prove that it's good for America to think about the future. You've helped us to prove that it's good for America to give everybody a chance, without regard to race or gender or any other thing that divides us, if we are united by our shared values and our willingness to be good citizens. You've helped us to prove that we can lead the world and be strong at home. And I think that all of you should be very proud of that.

We are trying to prepare this country for a new century in which the young people in this audience will be able to do things with their lives that most of the rest of us could not even imagine. And I believe we are well on our way to doing it. You all know how we're doing today compared to 5 years ago. What I want us to think about is how we can be doing 5, 10, 15, 20 years from now.

I'm proud of the fact that we have the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years and the lowest

inflation rate in 30 years and the biggest decline in inequality among working people since the 1960's. I'm proud of all that. The biggest drop in welfare rolls in history, the biggest drop in the crime rate in 36 years, I'm proud of that. I'm proud of the fact that we have taken dramatic strides to protect our environment with safe drinking water and new clean air standards and new food standards and record numbers of toxic waste dumps cleaned up and record land set aside in preservation forever. Only the two Roosevelt administrations have set aside as much land to preserve for our country's future.

But there is a lot to do. And you have to be a part of that. Because we're going through a transition in which we're changing so fast we can never be satisfied with where we are, we have to keep worrying about where we're going. And let me just mention one or two things, if I might.

First of all, we're debating this balanced budget plan. If we pass a balanced budget that's faithful to the agreement I made, it will have the biggest increase in health care for children since Medicaid was enacted in 1965—the biggest. Thank you, Senator Kennedy, for leading that. It will have the biggest increase in Federal support for education since 1965. It will have the biggest increase in Federal support, to help everybody in this country who is willing to work go on to college, since the GI bill was passed over 50 years ago.

It is a good budget for the American people, but it is important that we be faithful to it. If we are faithful to the agreement, it will help cities like Boston to take sites that have been polluted and are therefore useless now and clean them up and use them to provide for development and new jobs and new opportunities, to make sure this economic recovery reaches people who haven't felt it yet. If we are faithful to it, we can do all these things.

The other thing that I am determined to do, that I spoke a little about in Washington before I left today, is to get a tax bill out of this committee—out of the Congress that helps all the American people. We can pay for this tax cut.

First of all, let me say this: I would not support any tax cut that will bring back the bad old days of exploding deficits. I would not do that. This tax bill, in the first 5 years, is about one-tenth of the cost of the tax bill that was adopted in 1981, when the Reagan administration came in and asked us to adopt trickle-down economics. So we're not talking about a huge bill here. What we are talking about is a bill that is basically the dividend the American people have earned for bringing this economy back. And I believe it's important to pass a bill that will give everyone a fair chance to participate in it and that will be faithful to the budget agreement, which means among other things that we have to provide substantial resources to help middle class people to raise their children and educate them and then keep on getting an education for a lifetime. We have got to make at least 2 years of college as universal in the 21st century as a high school diploma is today.

Why did Boston come back? Why is Massachusetts coming back? Just drive around this town and look at the concentration of world-class universities. Every person in this country who gets out of high school and has at least 2 years of fine education afterward has a fair chance to get a decent job with a growing income. Everybody who doesn't is likely to get a job with declining incomes.

We must not use this tax bill to help people who don't need it too much without giving the middle class the tools they need to make higher education universal in America in the 21st century. We can do it, and we have to do it.

There are a lot of other things going on there now. We're reviewing this tobacco settlement, and again, a lot of people who have fought for the public health for years and years and years deserve a lot of credit for this. I have no final opinion on it yet, but I will say this: We cannot agree to anything which undermines the capacity of the Federal Government to protect the public health and the health of our children. If this settlement furthers it, we should be for it. If it doesn't, we should not. That ought to be the test.

In the area of crime, let me say the crime rate's going down; that's the good news. The bad news is it's still going up among people under 18 in many places, but not in Boston. And the mayor heard me in San Francisco last week saying to the mayors, I am trying to pass

a crime bill for juveniles in this country that will give other cities the tools that Boston has used to take us now almost 2 full years without a child under 18 being killed by a handgun. If we can do it here, it ought to be done everywhere in America, and we can do it.

And finally, let me say we've had a remarkable amount of success moving people from welfare to work. But we have to create about another million jobs in the next 4 years. I've done everything I could to mobilize the private sector, but we can do more. Many of you have helped in this regard, and for that I am grateful. In this budget agreement there are specific provisions which will make it easier for us to work with cities and the private sector to hire people to move from welfare to work.

But I would just say on that portion of the budget, everyone who ever criticized the welfare program and everyone who ever said every able-bodied person ought to work now has a moral obligation to support laws that will make sure there are jobs there. You cannot tell people they have to go to work unless they have work. That is a big moral obligation of this balanced budget, and we dare not pass a budget that walks away from that obligation to people. We have said, "You have to work." We have to give them the jobs and the chance to build dignified, successful lives for themselves and their children.

The last point I would like to make is this: In the end, the success of the United States in the new century will depend upon a remarkable partnership between our Government, our private sector, and individual citizens. I have been very moved by the things that I have seen repeatedly here in Boston in the form of citizen service: the City Year program, the mayor's youth advisory council, all the people that I've seen volunteering in various aspects of the effort to keep juveniles out of trouble and away from violence. We need more of that.

And finally, we have got to prove that we can become the world's first truly multiracial, multiethnic democracy. A couple of weeks ago, I went out to the University of California at San Diego and asked the American people to join me for at least a year, and maybe longer, in a national conversation about where we are today on the subject of our racial differences, what we have to do to make sure that we are thinking and acting right about this and what new laws and policies we need.

June 30 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997

I just leave you with this thought: In the United States today, there is one State only, Hawaii, that has no majority race. Within 3 to 5 years, our largest State, California, will have no majority race. Today, we have 5 school districts with over 100 different racial and ethnic groups represented among the student bodies—5 school districts. Within 2 years, we'll have 12, maybe 15. And within 30 years, there will be no majority race in the United States. We had better start thinking about how we are going to make sure that what we always said, which is that America is a place of ideas and ideals, not a place where there is a dominant race, a dominant class, a dominant in-crowd—we better make sure that's true.

And so I leave you with this. The people of Boston and Massachusetts have embraced the vision that I have painted for the future more vigorously, more consistently, more ardently than any other place in the United States. I ask you to stay with it. Because if you imagine what the future is going to be and how we

would make it, it is clear that if we succeed in becoming the world's first truly multiracial, multiethnic, multireligious democracy, we will be better positioned in the 21st century even than we are now to lead the world toward peace and freedom and prosperity and to give our children a better future than any generation has ever known.

That's what I'm dedicated to. We've got 3½ more years to work for it, and your presence here today has dramatically increased the chances that we will succeed.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:18 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Copley Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Thomas Menino of Boston; Steve Grossman, national chair, and Alan D. Solomont, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; Michael Dukakis, former Governor of Massachusetts, and his wife, Kitty; and Joan Menard, Massachusetts State Democratic chair.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Most-Favored-Nation Status for Russia June 30, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On September 21, 1994, I determined and reported to the Congress that the Russian Federation is in full compliance with the freedom of emigration criteria of sections 402 and 409 of the Trade Act of 1974. This action allowed for the continuation of most-favored-nation (MFN) status for Russia and certain other activities without the requirement of an annual waiver.

As required by law, I am submitting an updated report to the Congress concerning the

emigration laws and policies of the Russian Federation. You will find that the report indicates continued Russian compliance with U.S. and international standards in the area of emigration.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks at the St. James Theatre in New York City June 30, 1997

I deserve that for that macarena stunt. [Laughter] Thank you, Whoopi. Thank you, cast. Thank you, Maestro. Thank you, orchestra.

You know, the theater is normally dark on Monday night. I think we can certify that this was most certainly not dark tonight, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. I