

other place in the world. We have to be organized to deal with that.

There's lots to do. And I just want to say that I started with a vision. I wanted to be able to say when I left office that every child in this country would have the opportunity to live up to his or her own dreams and capacities if he or she were willing to work for it. I wanted to be able to say that we were still the world's leading force for peace and freedom and prosperity in the world. And I wanted to be able to say, that amidst all of our increasing diversity, we were coming together as one America, respecting, even celebrating our differences but bound together by things that unite us, more importantly.

And every day I fight against the things I think will undermine that, and I fight for the things I think will advance it. And all you have to do is to go back to the fight on family leave and the budget fight in 1993, the fight for the assault weapons ban, for the Brady bill, for 100,000 police on the street in 1994, the fight against the contract on America in 1995, the fight against taking the guarantee of medical care away from our poorest children, the fight against taking away all that Federal aid to education that was helping us to advance oppor-

tunity—just go through every single decision that's been made in the last 5 years—most of you who have come here to help us could have made more money in the short run helping the other party. You came here because you thought we needed to go forward together and because you shared that vision.

I'm here to tell you that we need to keep on with that vision because we, in spite of all the good times, we dare not rest. We have too much to do, too many people to lift up, and too many new bridges to cross before we get to that new century. And thanks to you, we're going to be able to do it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. in the Postrio Restaurant at the Prescott Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Alan D. Solomont, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; Dan Dutko, chair, National Victory Fund; John Goldman, dinner cochair; Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr., of San Francisco; former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry; former Secretary of State Warren M. Christopher; President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; and State President Nelson Mandela of South Africa.

Remarks at a Saxophone Club Reception in San Francisco

September 20, 1997

Thank you very much. I'm always uneasy when Hillary is up here about to introduce me. I never know what is really going to be said. [Laughter]

You know, we—it's the world's worst-kept secret that we took our daughter to Stanford over the weekend—[laughter]—and bid her goodbye yesterday. And so, from, like, 6 o'clock on, Hillary and I are officially overseeing one of America's empty nests. [Laughter] And I've been thinking about how I was going to fill it. I was thinking about maybe I would get a dog to go with Socks, you know. [Laughter] When I heard Hillary talking, I thought that Willie was going to move in with us. [Laughter] Mayor, I love you, but they need you here. They need you. [Laughter]

I love to come to San Francisco. I love the community. It was wonderful; we got off the highway and were coming up from—we came up from Palo Alto and were coming up through the streets, and I now know—I've made that trip so many times from the airport that I know every block. And there's a little marker on every block, and I see the neighborhoods change. And I look for the people to change in the street. And I can always sort of measure how I'm doing by whether it's the same good response in every block, and then when I'm not doing so good there's a difference. [Laughter] And once I was doing so poorly, there was no difference in any of the neighborhoods the other way.

But I always love coming here, where the people are so expressive and so alive and so

committed, I think, to building the kind of community that involves all Americans that our whole country needs. And so I'm very glad to be here.

I want to hear this band. The name of this band really—LaVay Smith and her Red Hot Band? Is that really the name of this band? I like that. That's good. *[Laughter]* And I love all these 1940's ties, you know. It's just great. It's another part of San Francisco, right?

I want to just say a couple of things seriously. First of all, I love this Saxophone Club. And every Saxophone Club meeting I've been to, since I started out in 1992 and some bright young person had the idea of forming it, has kind of reaffirmed my faith in America because it gives people a chance to participate in the democratic process, to contribute at a modest level, and to feel like they're a part of our administration. We also have all kinds of people in the Saxophone Club, including people of all ages. It used to be, when we started out, there were only young people in the Saxophone Club, and I decided that was discriminatory, and I see we've taken care of that here tonight. *[Laughter]* We have a wider range of people, which I think is good.

But I'd just like to say, as I'm very much thinking about this today as we started our daughter on her college education, our administration has been very much about the future of this country, about trying to fix America's present problems and organize our country in a way that will enable us to have the best years of America in the 21st century.

So when I ran for President, I said that I had a rather simple vision, which I still think about every single day: I want this country to be a place where everybody who will work for it has the opportunity to live out their dreams; I want this country to be a place that people still look to to lead the world toward peace and freedom and prosperity; and in some ways most important of all, I want this country to be a place where we not only tolerate, not just respect all of us for our differences but we actually celebrate them and are still bound together by a set of common values which make us all Americans and enable us to have one America with all of our differences. In a world in which people are killing each other tonight, are full of hatred tonight in different places because of all of their differences, I think it's very important that we build that kind of America.

And I'm glad that what we sought to do has worked for our country. I'm proud of the fact that we cut the deficit by 80 percent even before we passed the balanced budget plan. I'm proud of the fact that we've invested in education. I'm proud of the fact that this new budget has the biggest increase in education funding since 1965 and the biggest increase in helping people go to college since the GI bill was passed 50 years ago.

When all these tax incentives, work-study positions, and Pell grants and IRA's get in place, it will literally be possible for us to say that every person in this country who is willing to work for it can get a college education. For the first time in history, we can say that. And that's important. I'm proud of that.

Christine talked about what we tried to do in health care, with health insurance in this budget for half of the kids in America, 5 million of them don't have health insurance; more work for the 16 million families that are affected with diabetes; new advances to help people deal with breast cancer and prostate cancer and other things. We're moving in this health area. I'm proud of that.

I'm proud of the fact that the crime rate has gone down 5 years in a row and that we were able to defeat our opponents in the other party who were against the assault weapons ban, who were against the Brady bill, and who were against putting 100,000 more police on the street. They were wrong on all three counts, and the crime rate is going down because we listened to law enforcement people and community people. I'm proud of that.

I'm proud of the fact that we waged the war to protect the basic fabric of nourishing the environment through clean water and clean air and setting aside natural spaces, all those things that were under so much assault in 1995, in early 1996.

I'm proud of the fact that we have the lowest welfare rolls we've had in a long time and the smallest percentage of Americans on public assistance since 1970. I'm proud of that.

But there is a lot more to do in this country, because we're still changing very fast. We have to figure out a way now to make this economic growth available to Americans in neighborhoods and rural communities that haven't accessed it. We have to figure out a way to make the technological revolution that America is leading the way in broadly available, in all the schools in

our country and to people who, if they had access to it, could make more of their own lives.

We have to figure out a way to keep the whole rate of growth with low inflation going on. We have to figure out a way to continue to sell our products and services to the rest of the world in a way that helps developing countries and helps Americans as well. We have to figure out a way to grow the economy while reducing the amount of pollution of the environment and the amount of greenhouse gases we're putting into the atmosphere. Otherwise, we may leave our children, and certainly will leave our grandchildren, with a legacy where they may be money rich and nature poor in ways that we can never forgive ourselves for doing.

So we still have a lot of big challenges out there. We have a world that is still not free of danger, as we all know. We have to figure out a way to continue to work on the nuclear threat until it doesn't exist anymore. And then we must at least, by the 21st century, have organized ourselves to deal with all those problems we all face that can cross national borders and are moving more quickly now because of technology: terrorism, drug trafficking, the promotion of war and killing based on ethnic or religious or racial or other hatreds. All these things that we have to face together. So there's a lot left to be done.

And in the next 3 years and some odd months, I just want you to know that I intend to work down to the last minute of the last hour of the last day to make sure that we continue to make progress for the American people. How are we going to—yes, you can clap for that. [*Applause*] I want you to understand what this is about, what your being here is about.

We have honest differences—now, we had a principled agreement on the balanced budget agreement where both sides got something they wanted, because we had done all—our party had done 80 percent of the work in balancing the budget; we could all say we wanted to balance the budget and still get some things we wanted with the growing economy. And I want to search for principled bipartisan compromise whenever I can, at home and abroad. There are those who think we should never do that; I think that's plain wrong. Whenever we can agree in good conscience, we should agree.

But I don't want you to forget either that there are choices to be made, and there are honest differences. Today I was at a school

which was the first charter school created in California, when California became only the second State in our country to say that we ought to let public schools just be creative and get rid of a lot of the redtape—in a lot of these school districts, and let them start up.

I met a young lawyer, Mayor, who gave up his law practice to start a charter school here in San Francisco. And I met one of his students today, and it was awesome to think about our public school system basically sprouting a thousand flowers, all having one thing—they've got to produce results. Kids have to learn; they have to prove they can learn; they have to show they know something. Otherwise, we believe we ought to let creative people get in there and prove that all of our children can learn without regard to their race or their background or their income.

Now, there's a big fight going on in Congress now because some people would like to just write a check to the States and let them decide what to do with all the Federal education money. I don't think that's a very good idea, do you? And I think it would be a mistake for us not to be promoting the charter school movement. I think it would be a mistake. We need more of them.

I think it would be—2 years ago, I came to San Francisco and said, "We're going to wire every classroom and every library in every school in America by the year 2000." Today, the percentage of California schools that are hooked up to the Internet is twice what it was 2 years ago. The percentage of classrooms hooked up to the Internet in California alone is 4 times what it was just 2 years ago. We are supporting that with a specific program directed to these local school districts. I think it would be a mistake for us to back away from that and say, "We ought to let all 50 States decide whether that's a priority or not. If it is, fine. If it's not, walk away from it." I don't agree with that.

So we have these philosophical differences. The Senate in a bipartisan show of support agreed with me last week that we ought to have a nonpartisan board develop national examinations to have national standards of academic excellence in the basics of reading and mathematics for our children. An overwhelming vote in the House, led by the leaders of the other party, said no. I personally think that is crazy. I don't think you can have international standards of education if you don't measure them.

I don't want to run the schools. I'm trying to get less bureaucracy in the schools. I just want to say, "Here are the results; measure them. You figure out how to solve the problem. Inspire your kids, but don't tell me that all our children can't learn." So there is a big philosophical difference there. I think that's important.

You must never forget that all this matters. You must never—you look at the judges that I have appointed and the fact that they're not only the most diverse group by race and gender in the history of the Republic, they have the highest rating from the American Bar Association of any President's since the American Bar Association has been rating the appointments of the President to judgeships.

What happens? The United States Senate, under the control of the other party for the last 2 years, last year was the only time in 40 years—even in an election year, they haven't confirmed one judge to the Court of Appeals. Right now, over 50 of them sitting up there waiting to be confirmed. Why? Well, one Congressman said that he wanted to intimidate, and one of the Senators said it sounded like a good idea to him.

Well, I hope they won't be intimidated, and I think the Senate ought to do its constitutional duty and confirm the judges. And I'm going to keep appointing people that I think are mainstream, well-qualified judges that can represent America instead of one political point of view. And I think you believe that, and I hope you'll support me in that.

There are reasons why you're here. And I want to challenge you—I want you to go out to your friends and neighbors and say, "Look, I went to this event, and I became a part of this group, and I did it because I wanted to have a say in the world our children and grandchildren live in, and here's why I did that, and you ought to make a decision, too."

I believe that we need a Government in Washington that is not committed to solving people's problems for them, but at least we'll give them the tools to solve their problems themselves. I believe that.

And I believe that there are some things that we can only enjoy if we enjoy them in common, and therefore we must achieve them together, like clean air and safe drinking water and natural spaces we protect, along with national security.

That's what I believe. And I believe we have to achieve this future together.

So I want you to leave here proud of being here. I want you to leave here full of energy from being here. And I want you to leave here committed to getting others enlisted in our cause.

Every member of the Democratic caucus in the U.S. Senate has endorsed the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill. If we can pass it—and we've been trying now—every year I have endorsed a good bill, and every year the other party has filibustered it to death in the Senate—and still—you know, if you read about it, you can't tell who's on what side. [Laughter] It's a mystery to me because it's clear what happened. And they say they're going to do it again, but they may not get away with it. So if we can pass good campaign finance reform, then two things will have to happen: number one, we have to get reduced-cost or free TV time for candidates so they can still communicate in California; and the second thing is, you'll be even more important—you'll be even more important because we'll have to expand your numbers.

So I say again, when you leave here, you just remember what Hillary said—I normally agree with what she says—[laughter]—but when she said you were the most important person in this democratic enterprise, that is the truth. And we have to decide now—we are still in the process of defining what America will be like in the 21st century; we are still in the process of doing that. And I've got a very long agenda of things that I'm committed to doing in the next 3 years that I want to be your agenda.

But I want you to think, most importantly, about the big issues. Twenty, thirty, forty years from now, wouldn't you like to be able to say that every child in this country who will work for it can live out his or her dreams? Wouldn't you like to be able to say that your country is still leading the world toward a more peaceful, more free, more prosperous state? Wouldn't you like to be able to say that out of all the ashes of all the problems that we have seen from the Middle East and Northern Ireland, to Bosnia, to Rwanda and Burundi, to you name it, America rose up at the end of the 20th century to be a country where there is no single race or ethnic group in the majority, but we got along, and we worked together, and we respected and celebrated our differences, and then

defined what we had in common to make us one America? That's what I would like, and that's what you're making possible.

Thank you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:29 p.m. in the Terrace Room at the Fairmont Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Christine Pelosi, member, event steering committee.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in San Francisco September 20, 1997

Hillary and I are trying to get used to our first 48 hours of the empty nest syndrome. [Laughter] And so we found the youngest couple we could to host this dinner tonight—[laughter]—who have 17 years to worry about this happening.

I want to thank Halsey and Deborah for taking us in. And thank you, John and Ann and Brook and Sandy and Jeanne, all of you who sponsored this dinner tonight.

I will be very brief. I'm obviously in a rather reflective mood, as all of you who have ever sent a child off to college would be at this moment. I am profoundly grateful for the chance I've had to serve as President, grateful for the support I have received in two elections from the people of California, and particularly appreciative of the unprecedented help I have had not only in elections but as President from the communities represented in this room—sometimes directly working with us on hooking up more of our classrooms and libraries to the Internet, providing the software, the hardware, the training of teachers, sometimes indirectly, by continuing to advance the frontiers of knowledge and grow the economy.

I want to leave you basically with a simple thought as we break up and go to dinner. I came to this job 5 years ago with what I thought was a very clear, simple vision. I recognized a lot of the details I didn't know, although I thought I knew a lot about the basic economic issues and the basic educational issues and the basic social policies before the country. But I wanted to prepare America for a new century. I wanted to create opportunity, make sure that we could create, together, opportunity for everybody who would work for it. I wanted us to come together, instead of be driven apart, by our diversity. And I wanted us to continue to lead the world toward peace and freedom and prosperity.

The first thing we had to do was fix a lot of things that weren't working, that just didn't make any sense. One was our economic policy; so we adopted a new one designed to invest in our people, balance the budget, and expand trade in American products and services. It has worked. You have made it work. Millions of other Americans have made it work. But no one can seriously question that fiscal responsibility, investing in people and technology and our future, expanding American trade makes sense. And it's basically taken a burden off the backs of the American people in our productive capacity and also tried to play to our strengths.

The second thing we tried to do is to basically make America habitable again by having a serious anticrime policy that built on what was working on the streets. Now no one seriously questions that the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban and the 100,000 more police—that that was the right approach. And it's a good thing to have crime going down dramatically. People, just friends of mine who aren't even in politics, comment from time to time now as they travel from American city to American city how much safer it is in city X, Y, or Z than it used to be.

We have changed the way the Government works. We had the biggest reduction in welfare rolls in history. The Federal Government has 300,000 fewer people working for it than it did the day I became President. And we are trying, slowly but surely, to modernize it.

I saw someone out of your general line of work was in Washington the other day saying that most people out here operated at 3 times faster than normal business life; most people in Government operate 3 times slower. Therefore, you're nine to one ahead of us. [Laughter] I don't know who said that, but I think the math is right and the characterization is roughly accurate. But I'm trying to change that.