

Tuesday so we'll have a big celebration Tuesday night.

God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. in the athletic center at the College of Staten Island. In

his remarks, he referred to Marlene Springer, president, College of Staten Island; State Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly; and Mr. Vitaliano's opponent, Vito Fossella, Republican candidate for New York's 13th Congressional District.

Remarks at a Rally for Gubernatorial Candidate Jim McGreevey in Edison, New Jersey November 2, 1997

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, if you have heard the radio spot I did for your next Governor, you know that I am not in very strong voice. I've been a little hoarse. But the subject of my speech is the last line of the radio address: I may have lost my voice, but you can find your voice on Tuesday, election day.

I want to thank the people of New Jersey for being so good to me and to Al Gore in 1992 and in 1996. I thank the Members of your congressional delegation who are here who work with us every day, Congressmen Payne and Menendez, Pallone and Pascrell; and our good friend Congressman Harold Ford from Tennessee. I thank Barbara Buono, Senator Bryant, Chairman Giblin for helping in this campaign. I want to say a special word of thanks to your Senator, Senator Lautenberg, who did so much work on the balanced budget. And I want to thank Senator Torricelli for the work he did—for the work he has done on the balanced budget and the work he has done to stand up to the negative partisan attacks of the leaders of the other party. You should be very proud of both of them for what they have done.

I'm glad to be back here at Middlesex. Hillary and I were here 3 years ago. Since I came here, with the help of these Members in Congress, we passed a balanced budget which includes the HOPE scholarship, which is a \$1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college so that every American can go on to a place like Middlesex. And I want to thank the students here for their engagement in community service, for their involvement in AmeriCorps. And especially I want to thank the volunteers in the America Reads program who are making sure our children can read.

Now, this is an interesting Governor's race. As I said the last time I was here, Senator McGreevey, I don't get a vote in New Jersey, and he won't get a vote in Congress—why am I here? Why have two members of the Republican majority in Congress come here to campaign for the Governor in the last few days? Because it really matters in the world we're trying to create for the 21st century not only what we do in Washington but what happens in the State capitals.

And so I say to you, in the last 2 days you should listen to what they say and how they voted. You listen to see what I say and what I've done. But when you sort it all out, you should vote based on what's best for you and your children and the future of New Jersey.

This election is terribly important to me because the people of New Jersey are important to me, and because you can send a signal to the rest of the country about the direction that we have to take into the new century. You know, just remember what it was like 6 years ago when we started: the economy was in bad shape; the country was increasingly divided; the middle class felt like it was on the ropes and ignored; and we seemed to be drifting toward the future. Washington was dominated by exceedingly partisan debates and a lot of hot air rhetoric.

And I said, I think we can do better. We can create a country where the American dream is alive for everybody responsible enough to work for it. We can create a country where we're coming together across the lines that divide us, not being driven apart as so many other people around the world are being driven. We can continue to lead the world for peace and prosperity. But we have to change, and we have to move forward.

And I've worked hard to do that. But what I want you to understand today is that everything we do in Washington depends upon whether it is supported, implemented, and added to in State after State after State for its ultimate success.

I've worked so hard to get this country out of debt. You know, the deficit of this country was so bad when I took office, we had quadrupled the debt of the country in the 12 years before I became President, over the previous 200—increased 4 times. And I said we're going to reduce the deficit, we're going to balance the budget, but we're going to invest more money in the education and health care and environmental protection of our country so that we can have a better country.

We took some tough votes. When Senator Lautenberg and then-Congressman Torricelli and the other Members of the House, they stood up and voted for our economic plan in 1993, they were excoriated, and the people who are here campaigning against Senator McGreevey said we were going to bring the economy down. The people who are here from Washington campaigning against him said our economic policy would be a disaster. Well, we've had 4 years of experience. They were wrong, and we were right. And we're right about this race, too.

They said they were tough on crime. I said, let's show it. Let's punish the people that ought to be punished and spend more effort trying to prevent our kids from getting into trouble in the first place and support the police—and support the police with 100,000 more police and the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban. Their party was overwhelming against these measures. And now we've had 4 years to know whether they were right and we were wrong—and we know: Crime just keeps coming down. Our approach was right. We were right; they were wrong. And we're right about this race, too.

On the environment, New Jersey is a State that has shown time and again it is passionately committed to cleaning up the environment and preserving it. They said, "We don't have time to reauthorize the Superfund." They said, "We have to relax our environmental laws because it's too hard on the economy." They said, "It's just too much trouble; we're going to relax all these laws." I said no, no, we're going to have cleaner water, cleaner air, clean up more toxic

waste sites, and grow the economy—and grow the economy.

We've had a test now—4 years of experience we have—and we stopped the contract on America and its assault on the environment. And we know now—after 13 million jobs, the last quarter the lowest inflation in over 30 years, the best growth picture in a generation—we know our ideas are right and theirs are wrong. We know. You don't have to guess anymore.

And so I say, what's that got to do with the Governorship of New Jersey? Plenty. Let me tell you, folks, I was a Governor for 12 years—and on the hard days in Washington I think it was still the best job I ever had. [Laughter] And let me tell you exactly what it has to do, based on 12 long, good years. Number one, our economic policies of getting this country out of debt won't work in States that get themselves in debt. You have to have fiscal responsibility in Washington and at the State capital in New Jersey. You have to do it together.

Number two, we have to be partners. We can't restore middle class values, middle class lifestyles, and a future for our children by providing sensible tax relief and a strong economy if you have to deal with the problems that you have here in New Jersey with the car insurance rates and the property tax. We have to work together to rebuild the lives of ordinary American families in New Jersey.

Number three—and these are very specific—education. We're doing everything we can to hook up all our classrooms and libraries to the Internet, to open the doors of college to all, to provide more choices in schools, to provide more excitement and innovation and reform, and most importantly, as Jim McGreevey said, to raise standards. But the work, the day-to-day work in education, and the money comes at the State and local level. Everything we are trying to do in Washington can quickly be undermined unless you have a passionate believer that every child can learn, is entitled to the world-class education that every child needs.

Child health—10 million children in this country and tens of thousands in New Jersey live in working families without health insurance. We passed a bill to provide health insurance to 5 million of those kids as part of the balanced budget. But the plans have to be devised by the State. I trust Jim McGreevey to work with us to insure the children of New Jersey.

Welfare reform—we have reduced the welfare rolls by over 3 million, but we have a lot of work still to do. They said, just cut people off. I said, make people who can work, work; but remember, everyone's most important job is being a good parent. Provide the child care, provide the support; then require people to work. Our plan is working. But it has to be implemented by the States. I trust Jim McGreevey to help us drive the welfare rolls down more, in ways that support being strong for work but good to the children of this State. And it's a big issue for you.

Finally, in the last few months, Hillary and I have had two conferences in Washington about young children, preschool children—one on the development of children's brains, in which we discovered that an enormous amount of the capacity all of us have as adults was developed in our first 4 years of life; in which we discovered that if a child has loving and supportive parents and a good child care environment, they'll get about 700,000 positive interactions in their first 4 years, but if a child lives in either a home or is in a child care center or both where the children are not being stimulated, they might get as few as 150,000 supportive interactions in the most important period of a child's life.

Then we had this child care conference in which we discovered that some families are spending up to 25 percent of their income on child care; that some of our best educated child care workers are more poorly paid than some of our rudimentary workers in our society; and that we are simply not doing enough.

Now, I want to design a system in this country by the time I leave office where I can have confidence that people can succeed at home and at work, and no one has to sacrifice being a good parent to do their job. I want to see—I'm telling you, we have to balance the budget, we have to run a stronger economy. We cannot afford to do the whole job at the national level. It will have to be done in partnership, partnership with private companies, partnership with the States. I trust Jim McGreevey to care about the children of the working families of the State of New Jersey.

So that's about it, folks. [*Laughter*] I want you to understand this is not about me, or about my Republican congressional friends who are in here campaigning for the Governor. This is not about Washington or about what the pundits will say. Only one thing matters: Is it good for you and your children and the future of this State?

But I can tell you, based on 12 years as Governor, almost 5 years as President, and the things that I have seen work and my passionate commitment to the future of this country, you can trust Jim McGreevey to fight for that future as Governor.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. in the gymnasium at Middlesex County Community College. In his remarks, he referred to State Assemblywoman Barbara Buono; State Senator Wayne R. Bryant; Tom Giblin, State Democratic chair; and Gov. Christine Todd Whitman of New Jersey.

Remarks at a Rally for Mayoral Candidate Ruth Messinger in New York City November 2, 1997

The President. Thank you very much. Now, I'm a little hoarse, so you're going to have to bear with me. And I'll try to be heard in the back. I won't be funny as Al Franken—[*laughter*]—because I don't want to be driven from office. [*Laughter*] But I thank him for being here tonight and for always being there for me. Thank you, Al. I thank our friends, Peter Yarrow

and Judy Collins, for performing at one of the—at this event. I thank all of you for being here.

Let me begin by saying from the bottom of my heart, I am profoundly grateful and will be to my last day on this Earth to the people of this State and especially the city of New York for the wonderful support you have given to me and Hillary, the Vice President, and our