

The President's Radio Address *April 15, 2000*

Good morning. As we prepare next week to mark the one-year anniversary of the tragedy at Columbine High School, our thoughts turn to the safety of our communities, schools, and children. All of us—parents, schools, communities, and government—share responsibility to keep our children safe. We've all got to do our part. This morning I want to talk about three steps our administration is taking to support school and community efforts to prevent youth violence.

We know the best approach to the problem of youth violence is a comprehensive one. That means students and parents, teachers and police officers, judges, counselors, and religious leaders all working together. That's why we created the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative, to find and fund the best local ideas for preventing youth violence. Today I am announcing \$40 million in new grants for 23 school districts that have come up with innovative and successful strategies to reach out to troubled young people. These districts are bringing school nurses and counselors together to respond to warning signs like depression or bullying. They're improving classroom security and expanding after-school and mentoring programs. From little Arkansas towns to big California cities, they're making a difference in the lives of our children and our communities.

Second, I'm announcing new grants under our COPS in Schools initiative, providing more than \$60 million for police officers to work in schools in more than 220 communities. The vast majority of our schools are safe places for kids to learn. But any violent incident is one too many. This initiative helps to hire and train school resource officers to be a real part of children's daily lives, using the community policing strategies that have made neighborhoods safer all over America. Already it has placed 2,200 officers in more than 1,000 communities across our Nation, where they are heightening school safety as well as coaching sports and acting as mentors and mediators for kids in need.

Third, I'm announcing a new initiative to support counseling programs for elementary schools. The Department of Education has set aside \$20 million to fund local grant proposals,

because we have seen all too clearly that even our youngest children sometimes need our help. When I was Governor of Arkansas, Hillary and I helped our State to become the first State in America to mandate counselors for schools, elementary schools. We want to help all of our elementary schools who are willing to have the same sort of support.

Here at the White House, I've created a Council on Youth Violence to coordinate the work of the Federal agencies. We know the key to all of our success, however, is leadership in the community, at the grassroots. Last year I challenged Americans from community organizations, the media, business, and all walks of life to mobilize against youth violence. The result was the National Campaign Against Youth Violence, working to bring together a cross-section of citizens to keep our children safe.

Just this week in Memphis, the National Campaign kicked off a nationwide initiative to put the resources of business in the service of safer, stronger communities. They'll visit 15 cities and sponsor town meetings and media events, mobilize young people, school officials, business and religious leaders. And in every city, the National Campaign will remind each of us of our responsibility to do all we can to keep America's children safer.

Those of us who are parents have perhaps the greatest responsibility. We need to talk about safety and security in every house in America—beginning in the White House. That's why Hillary and I are sponsoring a White House Conference on Teenagers next month. We'll invite parents and teens, experts and educators to talk through the challenges of raising responsible children and the opportunities we all have to help our young people make the most of their lives.

The great American author and champion of human rights Pearl Buck once said, "If our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all." In our national struggle against youth violence, we must not fail our children. Our future depends on it.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:20 p.m. on April 14 in the Rayburn Room at the Atlanta Airport Hilton and Towers in Atlanta, GA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 15. The transcript was

made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 14 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Beverly Hills,
California
April 15, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Well, first of all, let me say that this is an easier speech for me to give than the one the Vice President just gave, because I'm not running for anything. [Laughter] So I was thinking, well, what should I say? And I asked Al, I said, "Is there anything special you want me to say?" He said, "Nothing special; just get up there and say, 'Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Gore.'" [Laughter]

I actually—and I will proceed to tell you why I actually think that's not an unrealistic litany there. Let me also say that the—

The Vice President. Note the amendment that I came back to you.

The President. He said, "Oh yeah, put Clinton in there somewhere." [Laughter] Actually, you know, I've gotten so gray, I tried to get Jay Leno to come in and give the speech tonight, but he turned me down. [Laughter]

I wanted to say to you that—I really, our friends over here in the media, they do a good job of covering this Presidential campaign. But they are obsessively interested to find even the slightest difference of opinion between the Vice President and me. And I discovered another one just tonight, when he was up here bragging on "American Beauty." Now, I loved "American Beauty." I love Kevin Spacey. I actually liked "Howard the Duck." [Laughter] And I just, you know, in the spirit of full disclosure, I thought I ought to make it. [Laughter]

I want to thank David and Steven and Jeffrey and Marilyn, Andy, and all the DreamWorks folks and all of you who are here tonight. I talked to Hillary right before I came in here, and she said to tell you all hello. And many of you have helped her, and I thank you, those of you who have done that, for doing so.

I want to thank you for helping me and Al and Tipper before, and in this election. And

I want to be brief, because I know you want to hear Sarah sing, and I do, too. But there are a couple of things that I can say that I think are meaningful.

It seems impossible to me that it's just 2 weeks away from—or 6 weeks away, excuse me—from 8 years ago, from June 2d, 1992, when I won the primary in California and knew I would be the Democratic nominee. And then it's 12 weeks away from the time when Al and Tipper and Hillary and I were in New York, 8 years ago, and we started this long odyssey together, got on a bus and started one of our bus tours.

Today I got up at 5:15 and went into the Sequoia National Forest to make the Grand Sequoia National Monument, to protect the remaining 34 groves of sequoia trees for all time to come. Now, that sort of thing I got to do today because Al's running, and I have more time to do those things. [Laughter] But it's the sort of thing we have done. We have now set aside more land under national monuments, the Clinton/Gore administration has, than anyone. I just loved it. So I want to say, first of all, thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve, to make a difference. Because if it hadn't been for our friends in California, and particularly for a lot of people in this room, I am not sure we could have done it.

I thank you for the support you are giving to the Vice President and Tipper tonight and for our party. I'm very grateful for all the leaders, present and past, of the national Democratic Party who are here. And I just want you to think about three or four things real briefly.

First of all, when Al and Tipper and Hillary and I moved to Washington to the White House, to the Vice President's residence, we really did have a different idea about the way the country ought to work. We had a vision