

is that energy bills are going up for people. We're certain of that. And at the very minimum, we ought to share some of the people's—not take the people's money in the first place, so they can manage their new energy account—their increased energy accounts.

Now, we need to hear the people of this country. We need to listen to them. We need to understand the entrepreneurial spirit. We need to trust families with their own money, because the true strength of the country lies in the hearts and souls of the American people. That's the great strength of this country. The great strength of the country happens when a neighbor turns to a neighbor in need and says, "What can I do to help? Brother, you got a problem; what can I do to help?"—acts of kindness that take place on a daily basis.

No, the true strength of the country is when somebody says, "I think I want to teach some values to a child," and becomes a Boy Scout or Girl Scout leader or Boys or Girls Club leader. The true strength of the country comes when a mother or dad understands their most important job is not

what they're doing during the day, but loving—if they happen to have a child—loving their children with all their heart and all their soul. That's the true strength of this country.

I know we've lost some wealth in the stock market recently, but the real wealth of America is the creative energy of our folks. And tax policy ought to unleash the creative energy of Americans and trust Americans with their own money. I'd like your help. I'd like your help. This isn't for me. This isn't help for a political party. This is help for doing what's right for America. This is important for our economy, but it's also important for the families and hard-working people all across the country. And we can afford it.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the factory. In his remarks, he referred to Elson Seale, owner, Bajan Industries, LLC, his wife, Delores, and their children Jamal and Janine; and Mayor Kay Barnes of Kansas City.

Remarks at the Tractor Supply Company and an Exchange With Reporters in Billings, Montana March 26, 2001

The President. I want to thank—Fred, thank you for having me, and I want to thank you all for coming. I look forward to talking about American agriculture with you. The issues that relate directly to Montana farmers and ranchers are issues that relate to Texas farmers and ranchers, too. Agriculture is an incredibly important part of our Nation's economy.

I'm going to tell you a couple of things; then I'm going to listen. But I am going to tell you that when it comes to negotiations and trade agreements, we will treat agriculture as an important, integral part

of our strategy. We won't kind of hold agriculture out and then maybe try to get a good deal or not. Agriculture is an important part of our country's economic future.

Secondly, I'm—we'll have regulations based upon sound science.

Thirdly, I'm worried about energy; I know you all are, as well. Energy is driving up the cost of farming. It's not only driving up the cost of, obviously, what it takes to run your vehicles; it also drives up the cost of fertilizer. And I understand that.

And fourthly, I look forward to discussing with you some of the conversations I've

had with our Canadian friends to the north, in regards to labeling and wheat policy and timber policy as well.

So I'm honored that you all gave me a chance to come by and visit. It's my first time I've ever been to the State of Montana. But I suspect I'm going to find—good folks here in this State are kind of like the folks where I came from, hard-working, God-fearing, family-loving people who are worried about how to make a living in the agriculture sector. Thank you all for giving me a chance to be here.

Agricultural Assistance

Q. Mr. President, do you see a need for a farm rescue package along the—[inaudible]—of last year's?

The President. It's too early to tell, but we've got contingency money set aside. We've got contingency money set aside in case that needs to happen.

Q. And do you see a need for a permanent change in the farm—[inaudible]?

The President. It's too early to tell. What we don't know yet is whether or not the new risk management programs that have been put in place achieve their desired effect.

Montana Drought

Q. Montana farmers are worried about drought, Mr. President. What can you do to help them?

The President. Pray. Pray for rain. [Laughter] We have just come through a tough drought in my State of Texas, and I understand what drought does to a farmer. The only thing we can do is hope moisture comes, and we've got to call upon the good Lord.

In the meantime, we've got disaster payments and risk management programs at the Federal level.

Thank you.

Treasury Secretary Paul H. O'Neill

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us what led Mr. O'Neill to go ahead and give his stock options back?

The President. You need to talk to Mr. O'Neill.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:08 p.m. in the warehouse. In his remarks, he referred to Fred Booth, Presidential designee to head the Montana office of the Farm Service Agency. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the Community in Billings
March 26, 2001

Thank you all. This is my first time in your beautiful State, and I want to thank you for the warm welcome.

Before I begin and say the thanks, I do want you all to join me in a moment of silent prayer for the two soldiers, men who wore the uniform of America, who lost their lives in Germany today, and two of our pilots who are missing over Great Britain. Would you please join me in a moment of silent prayer, please?

[A moment of silence was observed.]

Thank you. God bless them. God bless their families, and God bless America.

I first want to say thanks to my friend, your former Governor. It seems like you still remember who he is. I, of course, know who he is. I had no stronger ally, a good man, as you know and, gosh, maybe one of these days we might convince him to get his political uniform back on.

I appreciate so very much getting to know your current Governor. The first time I met her was at the White House. We had a pretty fancy dinner. It was the first