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PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

PRESIDENTS' SUMMIT FOR

AMERICA'S FUTURE

OPENING CEREMONY, INDEPENDENCE HALL

Monday, April 28, 1997

FORD - CHRISTIE ROMANO
"JUN.MILL" Jamil E. Wilson (Carter)
Nancy - Christina Vasquez
Bush - T.V. Muti "Moofy"
You - Matt Rosenfeld
Acknowledgments: Presidents Bush, Carter, and Ford; Vice President Gore; Members of Congress; First Lady Nancy Reagan; Lady Bird Johnson; Linda Robb; Henry Cisneros; Harris Wofford. 

And let me thank General Powell. After an historic career of service in the Armed Forces, he has reenlisted -- to renew the ideal of service that has given life to so many of our best hopes. At our last meeting when he was Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, I asked General Powell if there was another mission that might bring him back.
He said that if there were anything, it would be to help our children, and give them the chance to serve.

Now we stand at this summit for service because you have helped lead us here. Thank you for giving so much to America.

We stand before the house where America was born -- the place where "We The People" took the first step on our centuries-long journey to form a more perfect union.

On the last day of the Constitutional Convention, Ben Franklin walked out of this Hall and encountered a woman anxious to know what had happened.
She asked him, “Well, Doctor, what have we got -- a monarchy or a Republic?” Franklin replied, “A Republic, if you can keep it.”

For more than 200 years, we have struggled to redeem that faith and keep this Republic. And that challenge remains. For a free society truly is ours to keep, not something that will keep for us if we are complacent and indifferent. Needs in our society may only be met by people living together in the ways as city, state, and nation. Amendment cannot be understood who without our liberties and the individual freedom to one another -- but a feeling of the want.

We live in one of the great moments of change in human history, full of promise, yet so hidden and forces.
But even with all the progress we've made -- 12 million new jobs; a record drop in welfare rolls; crime down four years in a row -- we still face enormous challenges. Many of the toughest ones are problems of opportunity. It is too much danger and drug, too little education, leaving behind millions of our children and too many of our children are being left behind in lives of too much danger and drug, too little challenges. Many of the toughest ones are problems of the heart -- problems of the spirit -- ones that must be faced person by person, neighbor by neighbor, community by community. The teenager who needs a role model to look up to, the child who needs someone to read to her; so she can learn to read on her own; the single mother who wants to move off welfare, but needs an employer to give her the chance.
big government is over—but my friends, big challenges remain. We are here today to proclaim: the era of big citizenship has begun.

Citizenship is more than paying taxes; more than going to work; more than casting a vote. From the beginnings of our democracy, citizenship has not been an accident of birth, but a call to service. Especially now, as we approach a new century of promise and abundance, citizenship must carry an obligation to serve. It must be an ethic that is woven through the fabric of our lives.
Look around the earth; we see nations torn asunder by racial and religious and ethnic strife; we see people sharing a land and a history turning both into battlefields of almost unbelievable hatred. We have an obligation to ourselves and to the world to show how, with all our great diversity, we can live with one another. Let us work together; let us serve together; in this new century, let us be the nation that is too busy to hate.

America cherishes its volunteers. In churches and charities all over America, volunteers are giving more of themselves than ever.
But many of our problems are full-time challenges, requiring full-time effort. Young people, above all others, have the energy, the time, and the idealism for such service. Before they have their own families, the young can make a unique contribution to the family of America. And when they do, they not only gain a lifetime habit of service and a deep understanding of citizenship, they also take responsibility for shaping their own futures.

Our nation's young people are brimming with energy. A recent survey says that 90% of them would volunteer -- if only they were asked.
It is up to us to ask them. I applaud what Philadelphia is doing to expect service in elementary and middle school -- and I applaud what Maryland has done to require service in high school. I challenge every state and every school in America to offer our young people the chance to serve -- to help teach them the responsibility of citizenship.

We need to give all young people the chance to serve.

That's why I am so proud of our national service initiative, AmeriCorps.
Just as the G.I. Bill provided a powerful incentive to serve, we created AmeriCorps to instill an ethic of mutual responsibility -- so that young people could improve their lives, in return for improving the life of their country.

Since the creation of AmeriCorps, 50,000 young people have earned college tuition by serving their communities -- working to rehabilitate housing, protect our environment, immunize poor children, and help young people learn to read. And we know that the benefits of service compound; service leads to more service. A typical AmeriCorps member trains or recruits a dozen more volunteers.
I saw what it all can mean again last week in North Dakota. I saw the Red River, swollen and overflowing its banks, submerging entire towns and miles of farmland. I was stirred by the men, women and children who piled sandbags high to protect their homes. I was moved by the thousands who came from Minnesota and South Dakota to help. I was honored to meet the AmeriCorps members who were braving the murky waters.
And I was prouder still to know that a month from now, after the waters recede and the volunteers return to their jobs, the AmeriCorps members will still be there -- in the thick of the struggle to return life to normal, and then in the daily, ongoing, unheralded efforts to make life better.

The will to serve has never been stronger. Here in Philadelphia, a friend of mine, Rev. Tony Campolo, is leading a movement among churches to get young people to take a year off after college to serve their communities. We must make it easier for them to serve.
Today, I am proposing legislation that will allow any young person with a college loan to take a year off to serve without paying a penny more in interest on that loan. I call on Congress to pass this legislation so more of our young people can fulfill their obligation to give something back.

But I want to go even further. I challenge every charity, every religious group, every community group here today: If you bring on young people to do a year of full-time service, we’ll give them an AmeriCorps scholarship.
Put them to work as teachers, as mentors, as team leaders to help lead and train your armies of volunteers -- and we'll give them the chance to earn their way through college and launch a lifetime of service. Match our commitment, and we will be able to give these scholarships to 50,000 young people. With this dramatic expansion, by the year 2000, we will have given more young people the chance to serve in AmeriCorps than will ONE OF OUR MOST VALUED INSTITUTIONS have served in the entire 40-year history of the Peace Corps. And that's a remarkable accomplishment.
We can do this with the money that’s already in our budget -- and I hope that the non-partisan spirit of this Summit carries on to get this job done.

Beyond this, we must challenge more of our young people to enter the service callings -- like teaching and police work. Today, we are expanding the Police Corps, to triple the number of young people who can earn four years of college by agreeing to serve at least four years as police officers. And I want to issue a special challenge to the best and brightest students in America: commit yourselves to becoming teachers where you are desperately needed -- in our central cities.
Here in Philadelphia and in cities across the country, there are classrooms full of children whose God-given talents will go to waste if no one shows up to teach them or stays long enough to make a difference in their lives.

We have heard a great many stirring words today. But the success of this summit will be measured by whether it produces stirring deeds as well. It is up to you:

Go back to your communities and give light to young people who cannot see the promise of America.
Go back to your communities and teach our children right from wrong, and resolve that not one more generation will grow up on the streets.

Go back to your communities and organize new ways for people to give back, so that this becomes a true season of service across the nation.

Don't just live in your communities -- give life to them.
What you do may not make headlines, but to the student who learns to read, the infant whose health is saved, the family who receives help when all seems hopeless, it will be more important than any decision ever made at any summit meeting ever held. I believe that as children of God, we can never fulfill our own ambitions until we help our brothers and sisters to fulfill theirs.

There are many people on this podium with eminent titles. Senator. Vice-President. General. Governor. President.
But I know that I speak for everyone us here, that the most important title we bear is the one we share with everyone here and across this great nation -- and that is the title of citizen. Let us honor that title by pledging today to renew the sense of duty that was born in this place more than 200 years ago. Remember, this is our Republic. Service is the way we keep it.

And now I call upon Mrs. Reagan and my fellow Presidents to join me in signing this Summit Declaration -

- a call to citizen service to fulfill the promise of America for all our children.
And as we sign, we do so in the hope that in the weeks and months to come, millions of Americans will join us in putting their names to this Declaration and devoting their lives to this mission. **With this act, the era of big citizenship has begun.**

Thank you and God bless you all.
PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
PARTNERSHIP TO REBUILD
AMERICA'S SCHOOLS
LIGHTHOUSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
JUPITER, FLORIDA
MARCH 14, 1997
Acknowledgments: Marcy Haylett, student body president, for introduction; Rep. Robert Wexler, Rep. Mark Foley; Rep. Peter Deutsch, Lt. Gov. Buddy McKay; Florida Dept. of Ed. Commissioner Frank Brogan; Dr. Joan Kowal [KO- al], Superintendent, Palm Beach County Schools; Una Hukill [HUCKLE], Principal; students, teachers, parents and community leaders.

Men may be from Mars, Women may be from Venus, but the greatest people in the universe are from Jupiter. I always look forward to getting outside of Washington to meet with the people who are most affected by what happens and doesn’t happen there. And I am delighted to be here in Jupiter.
Today, I want to talk with you about how we can build our children’s futures by rebuilding our schools. I just took a tour of this school -- and I saw a lot that was good. Students who are dedicated to learning and teachers who are committed to teaching. But I also saw some things that were not so good. I visited a classroom of 29 3rd graders, and believe me the teacher in that room had her hands full. Learning suffers when our teachers are too busy with crowd control to give young students the individual attention they need. The spirit in this school is strong, but the building is weak. We can, and we must, fix this.
America must make the investment to make our future as bright as the present. We are living in a time of unprecedented peace and prosperity. In only four years time, we have produced nearly 12 million new jobs -- more than any other presidential term in our history. Family incomes are going up and the poverty rate is going down. Here in Florida, thanks to your hard work, there are more than 827,000 new jobs, your unemployment rate has dropped to just 4.8 percent, your student achievement is rising. But, we face new challenges of a competitive global economy. And the one thing that will most determine our success or failure is the quality of the education we give to all of our children.
That is why I have made education my number one priority for the next four years. And in recent days, I have traveled the country to stress the importance of all Americans working together to make American public education the best in the world. Here’s our goal: by the Year 2000, every 8 year old can read; every 12 year old can log onto the Internet; every 18 year old can go to college; and every American can keep learning for a lifetime.

I have proposed a ten-point plan of action to improve American education.
The cornerstone of this plan is raising standards for both teachers and students so we make sure our children master the basics. I have challenged every state to adopt high national academic standards and by 1999, to test 4th graders in reading and 8th graders in math, so that all of our children, no matter where they live or what their backgrounds, will have the same chance to make the most of their lives and their futures.

We must start by focusing on our youngest children. My balanced budget plan will expand Head Start to 1 million children.
And yesterday, the First Lady and I announced that we will host the first White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning. We also must open more charter schools that stay open as long as they meet high standards. We must make the 13th and 14th years of schooling as universal as high school is today.

But all this progress is at risk if our children are asked to learn in a landscape that is littered with peeling paint and broken glass, if we ask our children to stretch their minds in classrooms that are so crowded they can barely stretch their arms.
This is a growing problem across this nation. With student population at an all-time high, our nation's schools are increasingly rundown, overcrowded and technologically ill-equipped. One third of our schools need major repair or outright replacement; 60 percent need major building repair to fix a sagging roof, a cracked foundation; 46 percent even lack the basic electrical wiring to support computers, modems, and modern communications technology. And from Los Angeles to Atlanta to Palm Beach County, Florida -- the portable classroom is becoming a common sight in school yards. Right behind me here, where these temporary classroom buildings are, there used to be a playground.
But, because of overcrowding here, the children no longer have a place to play. The student population in Florida is growing at the third fastest rate of any state in the nation. School construction and repair are just not keeping up.

This has become a national problem, and it demands national action. That is why, last July at the White House, I announced our proposal that the federal government, for the first time, join with states and communities to modernize and renovate our public schools. Since then, the Department of Education has solicited ideas from hundreds of people across the country who are responsible for school financing.
Those discussions have resulted in our decision to
give even more flexibility to states to develop innovative
financing -- and to target half the money to school districts
that need it the most.

Today, I am sending new legislation to the
Congress to provide federal assistance to help local
communities and states rebuild the nation’s schools.
The Partnership to Rebuild America’s Schools Act will
provide $5 billion over the next four years to help
upgrade old schools and build new schools.
This will spur $20 billion in investments for school modernization by states, localities and the private sector. That means at least $200 million to Florida schools, $10 million of which goes directly to schools right here in this county. I urge Congress and communities to step up to this challenge. We simply cannot ask our teachers to build up children in buildings that are literally falling down.

The schools of the future should be safe and spacious, and good places to learn. And they should also be equipped with computers, new media and state of the art science labs.
I have challenged America to harness the forces of technology and connect every school and library to the Internet by the Year 2000. **Today I am pleased to announce that the Department of Education is awarding a $7.9 million Technology Literacy Challenge Grant to help bring Florida’s schools into the 21st century.**

We expect a lot of our schools, our students and our teachers -- and we should. There is a lot riding on their success. But we cannot expect our children and our teachers to build strong futures on a crumbling foundation.
With the steps we have taken today, we can be assured that the future of our schools and our students stands on solid ground.

Thank you and God bless you all.
It is hard to believe that fifty years ago today at Ebbets Field, a 28-year-old rookie changed the face of baseball and American society. Jackie Robinson scored the go-ahead run that day, and we have all been trying to catch up to him ever since.
Jackie Robinson believed that education, not sports, was the key to real success in life. He took that message to young people wherever he went.

And I want to congratulate Rachel for continuing that mission through the work of the Jackie Robinson Foundation, which has given hundreds of young people the chance to pursue their dream of a college education.

Jackie would be proud that his memory is being honored in that way.

If Jackie Robinson were here today, I believe he would say: Now that we have achieved equity on the playing field, we must take the next step and achieve equality in the front offices and board rooms of baseball and corporate America.
And now that we can all sit side by side at a baseball game, we must take the next step and make sure that when we leave the stands, we stand for something more magnificent than a grand slam -- a grand society, where all of us have an equal chance to work together to build a better future. Let that be the true legacy of Jackie Robinson. Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America.
THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
3-21-97

3/21/97 6 p.m.

PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE WITH
RUSSIAN PRESIDENT YELTSIN
HELSINKI, FINLAND
MARCH 21, 1997

copied
Laura Corps

names and notes
Let me first thank President Ahtisaari, Prime Minister Lipponen and all the people of Finland for their gracious hospitality and for playing an extremely constructive role in a new era for Europe.

This is my first meeting with President Yeltsin in each of our second terms, our eleventh meeting overall. At each meeting we have strengthened our nations’ relationship and laid a firmer foundation for peace and security, freedom and prosperity in the 21st century.
Here in Helsinki, we have addressed three fundamental challenges: first, building an undivided, democratic and peaceful Europe for the first time in history; second, continuing to lead the world away from the nuclear threat; and third, forging new ties of trade and investment that will help Russia complete its remarkable transformation to a market economy and bring greater prosperity to all our peoples.

A Europe undivided and democratic must be a secure Europe. NATO is the bedrock of Europe’s security and the tie that binds the United States to that security.
That is why the United States has led the way in adapting NATO to new missions, opening its doors to new members, strengthening NATO's ties to non-members, and seeking to forge a strong, practical partnership between NATO and Russia.

We are building a new NATO, just as the Russian people are building a new Russia. I am determined that Russia become a respected partner with NATO in making the future for all of Europe peaceful and secure.

I reaffirmed that NATO enlargement and the Madrid Summit will proceed and President Yeltsin made clear that he thinks that is a mistake.
But we also have an important -- and I think overriding -- agreement: we agree that the relationship between the U.S. and Russia and the benefits to all of cooperation between NATO and Russia are too important to be jeopardized or undermined.

I believe it is very significant that President Yeltsin and I have agreed to a joint statement that acknowledges our disagreement but also provides an impetus to our common quest for a NATO-Russia document.
We didn’t come here expecting to change each other’s minds on our disagreement. But we both did come hoping to find a way of shifting the accent from our disagreement to the goals, tasks and opportunities we share. And we have succeeded.

President Yeltsin and I agreed that NATO Secretary General Solana and Russian Foreign Minister Primakov should try to complete negotiations on a NATO-Russia document in the coming weeks. It would include a forum for regular consultations that would allow NATO and Russia to work and act together -- as they are doing today in Bosnia...
It would give evidence to the fact that a new Russia and a new NATO are partners, not adversaries, in bringing a brighter future to Europe.

We also agreed that our negotiators and those of the other 28 participating states should accelerate their efforts in Vienna to adapt the CFE Treaty to the post-Cold War era by setting new limits on conventional forces.

The 28 area of our discussion was our obligation. Next, the United States and Russia must continue to lead the world away from the dangers of weapons of mass destruction.
We already have taken important steps. We signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. We extended the Non Proliferation Treaty. We stopped targeting each other’s cities and citizens. We put START I into force. And we are both committed to securing ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention before it goes into force next month, so that we can finally begin to banish poison gas from this earth.

Today, President Yeltsin agreed to seek the Duma’s prompt ratification of START II. We will not stop there.

The United States is prepared to open negotiations on further strategic arms cuts with Russia under a START III immediately after the Duma ratifies START II.
President Yeltsin and I agreed on guidelines for START III negotiations that will cap at 2,000 to 2,500 the number of strategic nuclear warheads each of our countries would retain and to finish the reductions of START III by the year 2007. Think about it: this means that within a decade, we will have reduced both sides' strategic nuclear arsenals 80% below their Cold War height of just five years ago.

We also reached agreement in our work to preserve the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty -- a cornerstone of our arms control efforts.
Distinguishing between ballistic missile systems restricted by the ABM treaty and theater missile defenses that are not restricted has been a very difficult issue to resolve.

Today, after three years of negotiations, we agreed to preserve the ABM Treaty while giving each of us the ability to develop defenses against theater missiles.

Finally, the strong, secure Russia we welcome as a full partner for the 21st century requires that the benefits of democracy and free markets must be felt by Russia's citizens.
President Yeltsin recently demonstrated his determination to reinvigorate economic reform in Russia in his State of the Federation address and with the appointment of a new economic team. His bold agenda to improve the investment climate and stimulate growth includes comprehensive tax reform, new energy laws, and tough anti-crime legislation.

To help American companies take advantage of opportunities in Russia, we will mobilize loans, loan guarantees and other funds to finance billions of dollars in new investment. We will work with Russia to advance its membership in key international economic institutions like the WTO, the Paris Club and the OECD.
And with the approval of the other G-7 nations, we will substantially increase Russia's role in the Summit of the Eight in Denver this June:

Here in Helsinki, in making concrete progress on these fundamental challenges, we have strengthened the foundation of our partnership and the future of our people.

But just as our work did not begin here, it does not end here. There is much more to do and I look forward to our common work in the days ahead.

(ISRAEL INSERT)

NEXT PAGE
Before I close, I want to say a word about the bombing today in Tel Aviv.

Once again a cowardly and outrageous act of terror has brought death and injury to the people of Israel. I want to condemn this act of terror and to extend my deepest sympathies to the families of those killed and injured in this senseless attack.

There is no place for terror and violence in this process. There must be absolutely no doubt in the minds of the friends and enemies of the peace process that the Palestinian Authority is unalterably committed to preempting and preventing such acts of terror and violence. Only in an environment free from terror and
PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

AL SHANKER MEMORIAL SERVICE

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

APRIL 9, 1997

[Handwritten note: copied Lawn Corps]
Eadie Shanker; Jenny; Adam; Michael; and Carl and his sister, Pearl; other family members, and distinguished guests...

On behalf of the First Lady, I want to thank the Shanker family for your courage and say that we share both your sorrow and your loss.

I wanted to be here—long enough to make up for the speech I was to give to heaven. At a meal we considered a husband, a mentor, a friend.

We are gathered here today to celebrate the life of a great American. Al Shanker was one of those rare individuals who recognized no limits and drew no boundaries in the fight for human dignity.
not only a union leader, but a national leader and a world leader. Whether building a strong teacher’s union in New York, or challenging the status quo as head of the AFT in Washington, or standing with other giants of freedom like Martin Luther King, Lech Walesa, Cesar Chavez and Nelson Mandela, Al Shanker was always on the frontlines of the struggle for justice.

But, first, last and always, Al Shanker was a teacher -- one of the most important educators of the 20th century. He spent his life in pursuit of the noblest of causes: improving public schools so that our young people could get the best education possible.
Al believed passionately that public education was the most powerful instrument of our democracy and America's greatest gift to the world. In my State of the Union Address this February, I declared a national crusade for high standards in education, which had been Al's rallying cry for so many years. After my speech, I called to let him know that his crusade had become America's crusade.

Al used to say, "When I taught, my students would call out, "Will it be on the test? Will it count?" I wanted to tell Al that his long years of work had counted -- counted for so very much.
I am glad I was able to do that just 18 days before he passed away. I hope it helped put his mind and soul at ease.

Al's ideas jolted the mind of a nation. He turned common sense into public policy and he couldn't be fooled by fads or silver-bullet solutions. When a teacher would tell him that the students in her class were complaining that she worked them too hard -- much harder than the kids in another class, he would tell that teacher to keep up the good work. Al's fight for standards was a fight to make sure every student got the same chance to succeed.
He did not believe that quality of education should depend on an accident of birth: where you were born, how much money your parents made or the color of your skin. "Standards," for him, was not only an academic issue, it was an issue of fundamental equality.

Ali used to answer those who claimed that setting standards would tie the hands of teachers, by equating it to surgery. There are standard procedures for every operation. I thought about that when I had my knee surgery a few weeks ago.
How would I have felt if my doctor had told me, "I know there is a standard way to successfully set this knee, Mr. President, but this hospital doesn’t hold me to that standard. They understand, I need to do it my own way.” I think I would have said, I need another doctor.

So we have learned that lesson, and now we are putting it into practice. I have proposed a challenging national reading test for 4th graders, and a rigorous national math test for 8th graders. And we want to help 100,000 more teachers, like Rebecca Palacios, become board certified master teachers.
When these changes are realized, we will have much of Al Shanker’s plan for public education in place. And I truly believe it will make our schools better. I suppose God had good reasons for not letting Al join us in that promised land. But let us never forget that he was the one who led us out of the desert.

Al Shanker was also fearless. That meant he could be unpredictable and drive us a little crazy from time to time. He once said something about Bayard Rustin that many would say applies equally to Shanker himself.
He said, “The great thing about Rustin was that he didn’t put up his finger to see which way the wind was blowing. He had the guts to say what he felt was right, no matter how unpopular it was.” Al could say something one day that would delight the liberals and infuriate the conservatives. Then the next day he would make the liberals mad and the conservatives happy. Al wasn’t right wing or left wing. Al was Al. He found his own way to the truth.

And he had one overarching concern: what was in the best interest of students.
He believed, as I do, that every child can learn...that no child should go through school without a rigorous grounding in the basics. And he challenged teachers to accept their full share of responsibility for the success or failure of our students.

In the last years of his life, Al Shanker worked hard to bring the people of the world together. And he wanted teachers to lead the way.
As the son of Russian immigrants, he had a deep interest in the work of the United States Information Agency which has been sending American teachers abroad and bringing foreign teachers to America to support the development of democracy, especially in Central and Eastern Europe and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. I am pleased to announce today that teachers who participate in these international programs in civic education will be designated "Shanker Fellows." That will be another wonderful part of Al’s great legacy. Some of the first Shanker Fellows are here with us today.
Al Shanker lived life to the fullest. He loved music and art and bread making and nature. And he loved his family. He put as much love and energy into his wife and children as he did his work. His life reflected the words of Herman Melville, who once said, “We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men; and among those fibers, as sympathetic threads, our actions run as causes, and they come back to us as effects.”

Al Shanker’s cause was education, and through it he lifted up our children, our schools, our workers, our nation, our world. He was our master teacher.
Today, education is the number one priority of the American people.

Al Shanker helped make it so. His life -- so full of turmoil and controversy and struggle -- ended in vindication and victory.

It counted, Al.

Thank you and God bless you all.
PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

CELEBRATION OF LIVES

THE MELLON AUDITORIUM

WASHINGTON, DC

APRIL 3, 1997
Good afternoon. One year ago, in an airplane hangar at Dover Air Force Base, Hillary and I met with many of you to share our grief --- for your loved ones, my friends, our colleagues, America's fallen heroes.

A full year has passed since that terrible day -- a year of pain and growth, of hurt and healing. We gather today not in mourning, but in celebration. For in this season of rebirth and renewal we are reminded that life is indeed eternal. The dogwood tree we planted on the South Lawn of the White House last year, in memory of your loved ones, has grown a foot taller and soon will bloom, in the words of Scripture, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."
The men and women we lost on that hard mountain, enriched our lives with the gifts of their love, their idealism, their talent. They enriched our country through their patriotism and their service. And they enriched the world through their sacrifice to the cause of peace.

To the world they were public servants, soldiers, business leaders and journalists. To all of us they were much more -- they were co-workers; they were mothers, fathers and they were friends. They represented the diversity from which this great nation draws its strength.
They were led by my good friend Ron Brown -- a champion of the American Dream, a man of passion and determination, who faced every challenge with extraordinary vigor and courage. Every person on that plane shared Ron’s vision. Like Ron, they all loved America. And they made the highest sacrifice of all -- they gave their lives for their country and for the ideals it represents around the world.

— America and our allies helped end Bosnia’s war. 

— Your loved ones went there to begin Bosnia’s peace. And the hope they had, the dream for which they gave their lives, is now being realized.
THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
4.3.97

Where once there was only war and despair, there is now the growing promise of a lasting peace. Divided families have been reunited. Marketplaces are full of life, not death. The lights are on; the water runs; homes and businesses are being restored; playgrounds belong to children again . . . and those children have a future to look forward to.

Today, a year later, we ask ourselves, how best to remember and celebrate those we loved and those we lost.

We celebrate them through the personal tributes paid by their families and communities.
The Commerce Department has set up a scholarship fund to help the children of Commerce employees. There is a High School in White Plains, New York named in honor of Lee F. Jackson. A scholarship has been established for Christina Kaminiski, the 13-year-old daughter of Stephen Kaminski. The William E. Morton Library opened last Fall at the Geneva Kent Elementary School in West Virginia. The Monterey Bay Export Assistance Center was dedicated to Adam Darling. The Naomi Poling Warbasse Memorial Fund was established at George Washington University by her family and friends. The University of Wisconsin has established a Charles F. Meissner Memorial Scholarship for students from the Washington, D.C. area.
The New York Times has established the Nathaniel Nash Memorial Foundation to support children’s education.

A New Jersey church and YMCA have teamed to create the Walter Murphy Memorial Fund. Riggs National Bank has set up a worldwide scholarship fund for the Buckley School in New York, in honor of Paul Cushman. And the Ronald H. Brown Foundation was established by his family as a means of carrying on Brown’s vision of a more compassionate, cooperative, and just world. There have been many other tributes like these.
We celebrate our loved ones, as well, by carrying on the mission of peace and reconstruction they undertook to Bosnia and Croatia.

When they fell, so many of you stepped in to pick up their fallen standard. Today, with the great outpouring of reconstruction aid from around the world . . . with dozens of American companies working to restore the currents of commerce . . . with the Department Commerce preparing to open the door of its new office in Zagreb next week . . . the habits of peace are taking hold.
Above all, we celebrate them by striving to live our lives in a way that honors their lives.

Whether we are in government, in our military, in journalism, in business, let us resolve to serve our fellow men and women.

When we see a child in need, a community in distress, a nation struggling for freedom, let us resolve to act.

Let us resolve to learn from this tragedy, and work, as so many of you have done, to make our airplanes and airports safer.
Let us resolve to honor those business leaders who perished by celebrating the best of American business.

Earlier today, the Conference Board and my administration announced that we are creating the Ronald H. Brown Award for Corporate Leadership. Each year, that award will honor America’s finest corporate citizens.

Above all, let us resolve to always shine a light of hope and freedom in the darkness. Tomorrow, we remember the life of one who showed us what that means. Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated 29 years ago, April 4th, 1968.
When I think of your loved ones, I am reminded of the words of Dr. King, who said, “All inhabitants of the globe are now neighbors. The large house in which we live demands that we transform this worldwide neighborhood into a worldwide brotherhood.” The people who we celebrate today gave their lives while building that house of brotherhood. It is up to us to finish the job.

Thank you and God bless you all.
Good morning. Vice President Gore and I are here in the Oval Office to tell you what we are doing to connect every classroom and library in the United States to the Internet by the Year 2000. We are here on NetDay, when citizens in communities across America come together to help us meet that goal. With us today are three AmeriCorps members, two local high school students and two Communication Workers of America volunteers, who are contributing to this effort.

NetDay is a great example of how America works best when we all work together.
Like an old-fashioned barn-raising, neighbor joins with neighbor to do something for the good of the entire community. Students, teachers, parents, community groups, government, business and unions -- all pulling together to pull cable, hook up our schools and put the future at the fingertips of all our young people.

Once we reach our goal of linking our schools to the Internet, for the first time in history, children in the most isolated rural towns, the most comfortable suburbs, and the poorest inner-city schools will have the same access to the same universe of knowledge.
PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

RADIO ADDRESS TO THE NATION

NET DAY 1997

APRIL 18, 1997

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

4118197
That means a boy in Lake Charles, Louisiana can visit a museum half-way around the world, and a girl in Juneau, Alaska can visit the Library of Congress on line.

Since the first NetDay just over a year ago, nearly a quarter million volunteers have wired 50,000 classrooms all around the country. And today, NetDay activities are occurring in more than 40 states. In a few minutes, Vice President Gore and I will have a chance to use new video and computer technology set up for the first time right in the Oval Office to meet with volunteers in South Central, Los Angeles and children in Hartford, Connecticut.
And I want thank them and all the NetDay volunteers for their service to our country.

We have to do everything we can to make technology literacy a reality for every child in America. That is why I asked the FCC to give our schools and libraries a discount -- a special "E-rate," or education rate -- to help them connect classrooms to the Internet and stay on line. On May 6, the FCC will vote on a plan to provide more than $2 billion in yearly E-rate discounts for schools and libraries.
This can make all the difference for communities that are struggling to make sure their students are ready for the 21st century. So, today I call on the FCC to approve this plan and give our children access to this new world of knowledge. Now, more than ever, we cannot afford for our children to be priced out of cyberspace.

But, connecting young people to the Internet is not enough. We must make sure that when they log on they have access to the information that will prepare them for the world of the future. Government has a vital role to play in all this.
For instance, NASA lets students talk to astronauts on the Internet. And Vice President Gore’s GLOBE project gives tomorrow’s environmental scientists a chance to interact with the scientists of today. And today I am directing every department and agency in our national government to develop educational Internet services targeted to our young people. With this action, we are one step closer to giving our young people the tools they need to be the best they can be in the 21st century.
We owe much of our progress thus far to the efforts of Vice President Gore. He has led our national campaign for technological literacy and he will now say a few words....
VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mr. President.

One of the steps we’re taking to connect America’s schoolchildren to the future is to provide local communities the resources they need. Last year we launched the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund -- $200 million to do just that. Our balanced budget plan proposes to more than double these funds in the coming year.

Today we’re awarding $11.8 million in Technology Literacy Challenge grants to seven states -- Alaska, Connecticut, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, South Dakota, and my home state of Tennessee.
We're also making awards to two territories and to the schools of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. These grants are seed money states can use to connect all our children to the 21st Century.

Some states will train teachers how to incorporate the Internet into their lesson plans. Others will invest in cutting-edge software. Still others will purchase PCs, modems, and all sorts of computer hardware. Already this year, our technology literacy initiative has awarded states $57 million -- which is helping thousands more young people use the Internet to research school assignments and communicate with students around the world.
I’d also like to say a special thanks to all the Americans participating in NetDay ‘97.

President Clinton and I participated in California’s NetDay last year, and we had a great time -- pulling cable, drilling holes, and helping to connect Ygnacio ["eeg-NAH-see-oh"] Valley High School in Concord, California to the Internet.

By the way, anyone interested in learning more about NetDay, or what the President and I are doing to connect classrooms, can visit our Web site.
With your home computer, or the computer at your local library, just point your web browser to this address:
www.whitehouse.gov Let me say it again . . . w . . . w . . . w . . . dot . . . whitehouse . . . that's one word . . . dot . . . gov . . . g . . . o . . . v.
THE PRESIDENT:  I join with Vice President Gore in encouraging all of you to visit the White House home page, and once again, I thank all the NetDay volunteers. Have a great day and thanks for listening.
PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

ADDRESS TO THE MICHIGAN STATE LEGISLATURE

STATE CAPITOL

LANSING, MICHIGAN

MARCH 6, 1997

MAYOR HOLLISTER

AG FRANK KELLEY
I am especially honored to become only the second sitting President ever to have addressed this legislature. Ninety years ago, Teddy Roosevelt, on his way to give a speech at what was then Michigan Agricultural College, now Michigan State, stopped here to address a joint session of the Michigan legislature at this same rostrum. You have since renovated this building to restore the charm and artistry that was in place when Roosevelt visited. In 1907, America was at the dawn of the Industrial Era.
This building had only been wired for electricity two years before. And President Roosevelt went from here to the college campus in a brand new automobile, built by a Lansing company that was then just 10 years old. This year, Oldsmobile celebrates its centennial.

This too is a rare moment in American history. Peace and prosperity abound. We have just completed four years where we produced more new jobs than in any other presidential term in our history. We are looking toward a world that is full of exciting new opportunities -- a true Age of Possibility.
Only a few times before -- after World War I and just after World War II and the start of the Cold War -- have we been in a situation where we were entering the defining years of a new president, a new peace, prosperity, peace, prosperity and a new power to the star of the United States. And when we were entering the Industrial Era as a powerful and wealthy country at peace in human affairs, new century, new mile.

We have experienced anything like this. We have an incredible responsibility -- in America and in Michigan. To meet the most of it.

Thanks to the hard work of all of you here and across the state, your unemployment rate has literally turned around from 7.4 percent in 1993 to 4.7 percent today. You have added more than 380,000 new jobs. Your welfare rolls have dropped 30 percent. And student achievement has risen as more schools are meeting the high standards you have set. Things are good and getting better.
But this is a time for us to build a new century. We cannot afford to squander it, in complacency and division.

That is why I am pleased that a Republican Governor and a bipartisan state legislature have invited me here today.

For we will meet our new challenges only if we reach across party lines—acting together, Democrats and Republicans, people from every point on the political spectrum, coming together as One America.

The message I bring today is the same one I carried to the Maryland legislature last month—the same one I will carry to other state legislatures, communities, and forums in the months to come.
We must find a new partnership. I am asking for a new kind of partnership -- with the people in this chamber, and people all across America.

The era of big government is over. But the era of big national challenges is not. And while national leadership can point the way, the real responsibility is one we all share.

Today, I want to talk about what we must do in two critical areas where the responsibility rests at least as much with you as with the national government: giving our children the best education and raising standards so our children master the basics, and breaking the cycle of dependency by finishing the job of welfare reform, and moving millions to work.
Taken together, these issues are at the core of what we must do to prepare America for the new Century. We must help all Americans have the tools to make the most of their own lives in this knowledge economy -- and have the opportunity to do so.

As I said one month ago in my State-of-the-Union Address, we must never forget that one of the greatest sources of our strength throughout the Cold War was a bipartisan foreign policy. Because our future was at stake, politics stopped at the water’s edge. Now we need a non-partisan commitment to education. Because education is the critical national security issue for our future, politics must stop at the schoolhouse door.
What we must do is to prepare our children and all our people to know what they must know to navigate the world ahead. Between 1992 and 2000, 89% of the new jobs created in this economy will require post-high school levels of literacy and math skills. But only half the people entering the work force are prepared for those high-paying jobs. Our schools are still turning out millions of young people who simply are not equipped for the new world of work.

That is why our number-one priority must be to make our public education the best in the world.
Our goal must be: every 8-year-old can read; every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet; every 18-year-old can go to college; and every adult can keep learning for a lifetime.

In my State of the Union address, I laid out a ten-point plan, a Call to Action for American Education [hold up booklet], that describes the steps we must take -- and the State of Michigan is already doing many of the right things.
Many of those points relate to what we must do for our people before they start school, and how we help them in college and beyond. We must begin with the youngest children, by expanding early childhood learning. We must open the doors of college wider than ever, making the 13th and 14th years of college as universal as high school is today. In my balanced budget plan, I have proposed education tax cuts to help more families afford the fine colleges such as those here in Michigan. We must give our workers the ability to learn and to earn for a lifetime through my G.I. Bill for Workers -- transforming the tangle of federal training programs into a simple skill grant that goes directly into workers’ hands.
But today, I want to spend special time talking with you about what we must do to prepare our students in our schools for the 21st Century.

We must rebuild our nation’s crumbling schools; we cannot raise our children up in schools that are literally falling down.

We must harness the forces of technology, connecting every classroom in America to the Internet by the Year 2000. [Thank freshman U.S. Rep. Debbie Stabenow, who has helped lead efforts here in Mich.]

I am pleased to announce today that Secretary Riley has awarded Michigan an $8.6 million Technology Literacy Challenge Grant to help Michigan classrooms move into the 21st century.
our schools must teach discipline and character
-- and serve as safe havens for our children. I have proposed funding 1,000 new community schools programs across this country to help keep our school doors open after school, on the weekends and in the summer.

We must recognize that the best schools are only as good as the teachers in their classrooms. For years, educators have worked to establish nationally accepted credentials for excellence in teaching -- through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, headquartered in Detroit.
Michigan has the third highest number of board certified master teachers in the country. My new budget will enable 100,000 teachers across America to seek certification as master teachers. 

We need a strong system of public education that gives parents and communities more freedom and flexibility in education. We should work together to give parents more choices of what public schools their children attend, and help teachers, parents, museums, and others create new public charter schools. I have proposed doubling the size of our public charter school program to $100 million. 
The President has seen
3-6-97

We can help charter schools set an example for expanding accountability in public education by holding them to the same state and national standards we expect of all our schools, making sure they are open to children from all backgrounds, supporting those that work, and shutting down those that are not up to standard.

All of this is important. But the most basic thing we need -- the most important thing we must do -- is to make sure that all our children master the basics that will be the foundation of success in the 21st Century.
When 40% of our fourth graders do not read as well as they should -- when students in Germany or Singapore learn 15 to 20 math subjects in depth each year, while our students often race through 30 to 35 without really learning them at all -- we are not doing what we should to prepare our children for a knowledge economy.

Let's understand why these basics are so important.

The point is not merely to teach our children facts and figures, but to teach them the ability to think and reason and analyze -- to gain in the tools and skills that are essential for the jobs and careers we cannot even contemplate today.
We are not doing right by any of our students when we set low expectations. We must put an end to social promotions, and make sure education means something.

We must have a high standard of excellence that all states can agree upon. That is why, I have challenged our country to meet national standards of excellence in the basics --not federal government standards, but national standards, representing what all our students must know to succeed in the 21st Century. I am calling on every state to test every 4th grader in reading and every 8th grader in math by 1999, to make sure these basic standards are met.
We already have widely-accepted, rigorous national standards in both reading and math -- and widely-used tests based on those standards. Michigan and more than 40 other states have participated in a test called the National Assessment of Educational Progress -- which measures the state's overall performance against a high national standard of excellence. Just last week, we released the annual assessment of math performance, and it shows that across the country our 4th, 8th, and 12th graders are doing better. Michigan's score was among the most improved in the nation.
Tens of thousands of students across the country have also taken the Third International Math and Science Study -- a test that reflects the world-class standards our children must meet for the new era. The headquarters for that test is just down the road at Michigan State. I want to thank Dr. William Schmidt at Michigan State for his leadership of this important study, and I am pleased that he is here with us today.

Unfortunately, the current tests don't provide scores for individuals; they only measure how an entire area is doing.
What we need are tests that will measure the performance of each and every student, and each and every school. That way, parents and teachers will know how every child is doing compared to students in other schools, other states, and other countries.

That is why I am presenting a plan to help states meet and measure the highest standards. Over the next two years, our Department of Education will support the development of new tests for 4th grade reading and 8th grade math to show how every student measures up to the existing, widely-accepted standards.
The tests will be developed by independent test experts in consultation with leading math and reading teachers. The federal government will not require them, but these tests will be available to every state that chooses to administer them.

I am pleased that today Governor Engler has endorsed our plan to test all 4th graders to make sure they are meeting the challenge in reading and all 8th graders to ensure they are measuring up in math. We have plenty of standardized tests; now it is time to test for standards.
Together, we are saying, this is not about partisanship. There is no Democratic or Republican way to teach. There is no Maryland or Michigan way to learn. Reading is reading and math is math. If we are serious about holding our children to the highest standards, every state in America must put politics aside, work in a bipartisan fashion, take up our challenge, and test our children in the same rigorous way. We owe it to them to succeed.

"Politics .... Schoolhouse door"

Raising standards will not be easy. Some of our children will not be able to meet them at first.
But good tests will show us who needs help, what changes in teaching we must make, and which schools need to improve. We are not talking about winners and losers; we are not talking about tearing anyone down, but about lifting them up. But you cannot lift them up if you don’t know what the score is.

Our responsibility must be to do what we can so our children can meet these standards.
When it comes to reading, I want to remind everyone that this past August, during my train trip in Wyandotte, with the help of two elementary school students, Justin Whitney and Elizabeth Schweyn [SCHWINN], I announced our America Reads Challenge. We set a goal of mobilizing a million volunteer tutors to help every 8 year old read independently. We will use 11,000 of our AmeriCorps members to mobilize this army -- and we should enlist at least 100,000 college work study students to join in this effort. I am pleased that 16 Michigan college presidents have pledged to provide some of those students. You here have already launched a similar statewide tutoring effort.
Let's make sure that every child can say what Justin and Elizabeth said after they read *The Little Engine that Could*: “I read it myself.” They showed us that when our students are held to high standards they can excel. I am pleased that Justin and Elizabeth are able to join us here today.

And I want to do more to help our young people be ready to be tested in math. Today I am directing the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation to identify and coordinate resources throughout the Federal government and through the non-profit and private sectors that can be used to help students meet the math standards.
I am also directing them to find ways to help our young people do better and learn more science. The entire national government can be a vital resource as educators in every community work to teach young people these skills. Let me give you one example.

Today, the federal government has some of the world’s most esteemed laboratories and research institutions -- we should make sure that every high school math and science teacher has easy access to this world of learning through the Internet. As our entire nation works to lift students and raise standards, everyone has a responsibility -- and we will do our part.
Throughout my career in public life—as a Governor, and as President—I have worked harder on education than on any other issue. That is because renewing education, raising our standards, and lifting up our schools is the embodiment of everything we must do to prepare for the 21st Century—to promote opportunity, demand responsibility, and build community.

When it comes to providing the tools to succeed, our other great challenge is helping to move the permanent underclass into our growing middle class.
And here, too, the only way to do it is by reaching across party lines and working together, Democrats and Republicans, national government and state government, business and labor and religious institutions.

Working together, we ended the old welfare system. Over the past four years, we worked with 43 states to launch welfare reform experiments, which helped move a record 2.5 million people off our nation’s welfare rolls. Here in Michigan, a strong economy and your efforts have helped move more than 208,000 people off the welfare rolls, a 30 percent drop. This is an accomplishment you can be proud of.
But this is not the end of welfare reform, it is a new beginning. Now that we have demanded that those on welfare take responsibility, we must all take responsibility to see that the jobs are there, so people on welfare become permanent members of the workforce. Our goal must be to move people from welfare to work so that two million more Americans are off the welfare rolls by the year 2000. I have challenged the nation’s businesses to join in this effort, and I have offered a plan to help them: Tax credits and other incentives for businesses to hire people off welfare; . . . .
incentives for job placement firms and states to create more jobs for welfare recipients; training, transportation, and child care to help people go to work. I urge Michigan’s businesses, non-profits, and religious organizations -- large and small -- to heed this important call. Each and every one of us must fulfill our responsibility -- indeed, our moral obligation -- to make sure that those who now must work, can work.

The most direct and effective steps must be taken by the states. The legislation we passed gives states the authority, for the very first time, to take the money that had been used on welfare checks, and subsidize private sector paychecks.
Missouri began doing this under one of our waivers and it is working. Now I challenge every state to follow their example. Use the new flexibility you have been given. Turn those welfare checks into paychecks. That is what we need to do to help welfare recipients find jobs and keep them.

Second, I urge you to use the money saved from moving people from welfare to work to make sure that even more people can make that transition. Your model program, Project Zero, is a good example -- investing in child care and transportation with the goal of getting everyone on welfare to earn a paycheck.
Finally, I urge every state and every Governor, Republican or Democrat, to join with me to get Congress to restore basic health and disability benefits when misfortune strikes immigrants who came to this country legally, who work hard, pay taxes and obey the law. To do otherwise is simply unworthy of a great nation of immigrants.

We passed historic welfare reform -- giving states the authority and flexibility they had sought for years. We were right to do it. Now states must live up to their responsibility, and help us finish the job.
On education reform, on welfare reform, on all our major challenges -- let us build new partnerships across old lines of responsibility. Preparing for the 21st Century is not a job for any one level of government alone. Many of our greatest challenges do not fall under the authority of Washington, nor should they. They do not fall under the authority of state capitals like Lansing, nor should they. The power to solve our problems rests with all levels of government, and all sectors of society -- and that is where we must forge our solutions as well.
PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

OPENING STATEMENT

ABC RADIO TOWN HALL MEETING

THE WHITE HOUSE

MARCH 12, 1997

THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN
3-12-97

From the Oval
I first want to thank Peter Jennings and ABC for coming up with the idea for this event. ABC is devoting unprecedented time to urge parents to do something we know works -- talk to their kids about drugs. All of us need to be a part of that dialogue. The young people who are here with us today are coming of age at the moment of greatest opportunity in all of American history. This is a time where young people who are prepared for it will have more options to live out their dreams than any previous generation. But this tremendous opportunity can be quickly shut off when drugs enter the picture.
Over the last decade we have made considerable progress in reducing overall casual drug use. At the same time, we have seen a rising trend of drug use by young people. We can and we must do something about this. That is why the number one goal of my national anti-drug strategy is to motivate America’s youth to reject illegal drugs. Government cannot do this alone. Every person in every sector of our society must get involved -- from parents to the media to young people themselves.

That is why this forum is so important. I am pleased that we are joined here today by Olympic gold medalist, Dominique Dawes.
As a national spokesperson for our new “Girl Power” campaign, she has just taped a series of radio and television spots, urging young girls to go for the gold and stay away from drugs. Dominique...
PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

CELEBRATION OF LIVES

THE MELLON AUDITORIUM

WASHINGTON, DC

APRIL 3, 1997
There is a High School in White Plains, New York named in honor of Lee F. Jackson. A scholarship has been established for Christina Kaminiski, the 13-year-old daughter of Stephen Kaminski. The William E. Morton Library opened last Fall at the Geneva Kent Elementary School in West Virginia. The Monterey Bay Assistance Center was dedicated to Adam Darling. The Naomi Poling Warbasse Memorial Fund was established at George Washington University by her family and friends. And the Ronald H. Brown Foundation was established by family as a means of carrying on Ron Brown’s vision of a more compassionate, cooperative, and just world.
Good evening and welcome to the White House. I want to thank each of you for your generous support of the Kennedy Center. For a quarter century, the Kennedy Center has enhanced the cultural life of our community and our nation by celebrating the highest artistic achievements in theater, music, dance and film. And it could not do so without your support.
America was born of the human mind and spirit. The arts play an essential role in the life of our country by reminding us of our creative spirit and our shared experiences. They challenge us with new ideas and summon us to become more than we are.

The Kennedy Center brings the richness and diversity of our cultural heritage to its stages every day. But it also brings the arts into the lives of all Americans, by staging free performances around the Washington area, and by sending touring productions and arts festivals to towns and cities across America.
The Center’s education programs help teachers to incorporate the arts into their lesson plans in classrooms around the country. They expose young people to the passion of great art, the power of our common culture, and the wonder of cultures from around the world -- and many of these students would have no other way to experience the arts.

Finally, the Kennedy Center is committed, not only to being a national model of excellence in the performing arts, but to being a national model of accommodation for people with disabilities -- and the renovations are already underway.
America is unique in the way we support the arts through a vital and ongoing public-private partnership. This great Center could neither exist nor thrive without your support. As I said in my State of the Union Address, we must all join together to make the year 2000 a national celebration of our common spirit and our common culture, in every community in America.

By helping the Kennedy Center to foster the arts and make them a part of our lives, you are more than meeting that challenge. I thank you for your commitment.