

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:10 p.m. at the Downtown Child Development Center. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks to the Business Community in Atlanta

March 19, 1993

Thank you very much. Virgil, I'm glad I let you introduce me. [Laughter] I'm delighted to be here with so many distinguished Georgians, the people here on the platform with me today, including Virgil Williams, who really did do a good job. And there are some days I wish I were called Governor again. [Laughter]

People ask me all the time, is it different being President? And the truth is, it is, in ways that are wonderful and ways that aren't so good. But I had an encounter the other day which describes, better than any words I could say, what's right and what's wrong with it. I was up in the White House in the Residence part, and I had to go back down to the first floor to a big meeting. And my wife had been having a meeting there that I didn't know anything about. It wasn't public, you know. [Laughter] And anyway, so I got down to the first floor, and these throngs of people were there. And I just walked right out of the elevator into them, which was nice. They were people I didn't know, and I stopped, shook hands with them all, and talked to them. And this young man I was with, who had come to work at the White House during a previous administration, was just aghast. He said, "Oh, Mr. President, I'm so sorry that I got you in the middle of all these people." And I said, "That's okay, I used to be one." [Laughter]

I want to thank John Portman and Sam Williams and Peg Canter and Doug Miller for hosting me and welcoming me here to the Atlanta Apparel Mart. I want to say a special word of thanks to these distinguished business leaders who are up here on the platform; thank my good friend Governor Miller—I'm glad to see Governor and Mrs. Miller here—for meeting me outside; and for Mayor Jackson, who rode in with me and asked me to do more for Atlanta. [Laughter] You know, I don't know what I'd ever do

if I came to Atlanta without a suit coat because I always have the Maynard Jackson memorial list. [Laughter] And I actually got giggled today in the office before I left the White House; they said, now be sure and remember to leave Maynard's list on the desk tonight when you get back so we can go to work on it. [Laughter]

I flew down here with a number of members of your congressional delegation who had a great, great night last night. I thank them for their presence here. And I'm glad to see many others in the audience, Andy Young and Max Cleland and others who are here. I thank you all for being here.

It was just a few days ago that I celebrated—and I did celebrate; I wrote Zell a note about it—the first anniversary of the Georgia Democratic primary, when all the experts were saying that if I didn't receive 40 percent of the vote here, I would have to pack up my tent and go home. And thanks to you, some of you, anyway, who voted in the primary, I got—[laughter]—57 percent, and I didn't have to pack up my tent and go home.

This is the first opportunity I've had to come back to Georgia since your State gave your electoral votes to the Clinton-Gore ticket in November. I want to tell you how very grateful I am for that and how much I enjoy working with your Representatives and how dedicated I think the people in Washington are now to break the gridlock that has gripped our country for too long. Not only did the folks in the House delegation who flew down with me today cast some historic votes last night, but there were also some attempts to derail our program in the United States Senate last night. And they too fell short, even though they were very carefully developed to be as attractive as possible. And I thank Senator Nunn for his help in maintaining the integrity of the program yesterday in the Senate, too.

When the House of Representatives acted last night to pass the budget resolution and to pass the emergency jobs program, they did something that our country, as nearly as I can tell from my study of our history, has never before done. They actually voted at the

same time to reduce the national debt and to increase our investment in jobs and in education, in the new technologies of the future, and helping us to adjust to the defense cut-backs and to the rigors of the global economy. Reduce the deficit; increase investment. In order to do it, they had to take some very tough positions. They had to vote to reduce spending in very specific ways, not just general rhetoric but real specific commitments to reduce spending. They had to vote to raise taxes after more than a decade of being told that that was always a bad thing to do. And they had to draw clear distinctions between different kinds of Government spending.

As Virgil said in the introduction, here at the grassroots level of America, if you're running a business or if you're running a city or if you're running a State government, you know there is a difference between investing in education and job growth and infrastructure and the things that will increase productivity and wealth and employment, and just expanding programs that may or may not work or taking more people to do the same thing. For too long in Washington there has been no distinction, so we've had this unbelievable irony for 12 years in which the deficit has gone up, but our investment in the future has gone down. And we have paid a terrific price for it.

I hope and believe that the process of real renewal has begun, but only begun. On the 57th day of this administration, our economic plan is almost halfway home. The new direction is designed to meet the needs of the broad middle class of America again for jobs and for schools, for bringing a college education back within the reach of ordinary people, and bringing down the cost of health care and extending its reach. It's about giving the poor a chance to work their way out of poverty and welfare and dependence, about investing wisely again in our future, about helping all Americans and especially our children to be stronger and healthier and smarter so that they can realize their full potential and our country can maintain its economic superiority, without which we cannot hope to lead the world in this new era.

At the same time, we're actually wasting a lot less of the taxpayers' money. We've cut

150 specific programs, and there are more on the way. Tens of billions of dollars in spending have been cut. And under this budget resolution, not one penny in taxes can be raised unless we also cut spending in the amounts prescribed.

The new direction is also about changing the nature of the way Government works. The Government that I inherited, through no particular person or party's fault perhaps, is too large, too slow, too distant, and often too old in its approach to solving problems. I am committed to changing the way the Government operates, starting at the top with my own budget and taking a look at every program and every Agency. I have asked the Vice President to take 6 months to take advantage of the best talent we can find and to review the operations of every single Government Agency and program with a view toward not just cutting unnecessary spending but literally changing the whole way Government works: relying more on markets and incentives, eliminating unnecessary layers of management, pushing decisions down to the lowest possible level, taking full advantage of technology.

I discovered that in the White House alone, if we could invest \$4.7 million in new technology, in communications technology and other technology, we could save over \$10 million a year in payroll. And we could do it in spite of the fact that we are now getting 34,000 letters a day. And we are trying to set up a system where we can actually answer them. The White House operation historically has been so antiquated that at least two-thirds of the letters that came in never got answered at all. And usually they were those that, to keep faith with the American people, perhaps should have been answered first. Often letters that were critical were just thrown away as negative mail, because literally there was no capacity to handle it. Thousands of people every day want to call the White House, but the switchboard was put there when Lyndon Johnson was President, and people still pick up wires and plug them into holes when the calls are made. When I became President, I walked into the Oval Office and found the telephone system that President Jimmy Carter had operated with. And I found that I couldn't have a con-

ference call, but when the light came on on my phone, anybody in the central office of the White House could push their lighted button down and have a conference call I didn't want. [*Laughter*]

Now, that's funny, but it says something about the tendency of Government to add layer upon layer upon layer to the way things used to be, when new things have to be done, rather than stopping old things while you start new things and changing the way things work. The longer you've got a monopoly on money and a monopoly on customers, there is very little incentive out there to change. But there is no real monopoly anymore because there's a limit to how much the Government can take out of the economy and we are constrained by what we have to spend on defense, on health care, on interest on the debt, and other things. So the Government is compelled to reexamine the way we do our business. And I think we're going to have some very exciting things to show for our efforts in the weeks and months ahead.

The plan I ask the American people to embrace and to support the Congress in embracing is a thoughtful one, built piece by piece, a strategy that looks at the entire picture of America and asks what we have to do to ensure growth. It's a plan for short-term job creation and long-term prosperity, a chance to invest and prosper in a free market system, to improve education and training for a lifetime, to make health care more affordable and accessible, to make our streets safer, and more importantly, to give our people a chance to be involved in the large work of keeping our country moving forward.

One of the most frustrating things to me about the year and a half that I crossed this country in the campaign was the number of people I met who had simply given up on the system. Now if we get 34,000 letters a day and half of them are critical, I count that as a good day, because it means that people believe they can write their President and somebody will be there listening and paying attention. People believe the system will work again. There was a poll in New Jersey last week—one of two States that have elections for Governor in this off-year—saying that 18 percent of the people who are going to vote in this election this year voted for

the very first time in the Presidential election in 1992. The Los Angeles Times poll said that 70 percent of the American people had actually discussed the economic plan I presented to the Congress and to the people with one of their friends or neighbors or family members. That means democracy is on the march again in America, and people believe the system can be made to work for them. And that is in itself a victory for the efforts that we are all making.

Make no mistake. I know that there are many roadblocks ahead. I know that I'll make some mistakes along the way. And I know, too, there are still guardians of gridlock in Washington who will fight fundamental change. There are those now who say that we ought to cut the investments that I propose to make in families and children, in jobs and education and health care, make them vulnerable, and then we won't have to ask as much from others in either tax increases or spending cuts in older programs.

There are about 80,000 lobbyists in and around Washington. By some estimates, they spend nearly \$1 billion a year protecting the various interests they're hired to protect. They get a tax deduction to do it, for a while. But the kind of children I saw today in the joint public-private child care center I visited before coming over here don't have much of a lobby in Washington. Pregnant mothers or out of work or hard-working parents don't have a lot of time to hire people to roam the halls of Congress to stick up for them. Those who are neither wealthy nor organized, no matter what they're doing, are very often the most voiceless and powerless in our system, even though they may carry the day in whether our free enterprise system actually works or not. That's why it's the President's job to try to speak and fight for them. It's why we have to encourage those in Congress to stand ready to vote for change.

Yesterday's vote in the House is really a huge step in that direction. You ought to talk to John Lewis or the others who are here, Nathan Deal and Buddy Darden or Cynthia McKinney or Don Johnson, and ask them what it was like last night—Sanford Bishop—ask them what it was like when we get 218 votes and all of a sudden people say, "My God, we actually did something here for a

change. We've got something to go home and talk about. Even if somebody jumps on us, at least they'll jump on us for doing something instead of for not doing something."

A few weeks ago I went with Senator Moynihan of New York to New York. We flew into an Air Force facility, and then we drove for about 50 minutes to Franklin Roosevelt's hometown in Hyde Park. There were hundreds of people along the way—8, 10 degrees outside, people standing outside holding their signs up. One person had a sign that I thought was pretty reflective of the American public mood. It said, "Just do something." [Laughter] Just do something.

Well, the Congress has acted in a fundamental departure from the status quo. They proved that change is possible. And let me just give you one example that has already taken place. Last year when this recession started going way, way too long and no new jobs were being created, the Federal Reserve Board began to lower the Government's rediscount rate in an earnest attempt to bring interest rates down. And interest rates came down some. But there was still a huge gap between the rate that the Government charged bankers and the long-term interest rates in this country. Just since the election, since this deficit reduction plan has come out, interest rates have been down between .8 percent and one full percentage point, floating back and forth more or less in that range.

I'll bet you if I ask for a show of hands in this room, there are a lot of people in this room that, in the last 4 months, have refinanced a house or have benefited from a changing interest rate on a business loan or a car loan or credit card purchases. There are millions and millions of Americans who, in the first 6 months of this year, will save more money in interest payments than they'll pay in the energy tax I propose for the full 4 years of this administration. That is what happens if you gain control of your economic destiny, if you keep interest rates down, if you bring this deficit down, and if you have a plan for long-term growth.

I've had to put on my foreign policy hat a little bit in the last 10 days, meeting with leaders around the world. I've seen in the last several weeks the Prime Ministers of

Canada and Great Britain and then recently the President of France and the President of Haiti and the head of the European Community and the Prime Minister of Israel. And sooner or later, it always gets around to a conversation where they say, you know—particularly the Europeans say—America is on the move again. You've restored people's feeling that the Government can actually work with the people in a country and get something going again. It can make a difference again. And that is what I came here to ask for your support for today: Not to agree with everything I say or do; I'm sure I've made some mistakes, and I'll make some more. But I think we ought to get up and go to work every day, and I think we ought to make a difference.

We're working hard first to fix this economy, to bring the deficit down, and then to face the other problems ahead of us. We need to pass, and I want to emphasize this, we need to pass what is a modest but important stimulus program to create a half a million jobs in the short run. We need to do it for a couple of reasons. First of all, the program is targeted to give businesses that are creating jobs more incentive to invest to create more jobs, and secondly, to target public spending programs into projects that are ready to go and designed to be guaranteed to produce new jobs. And, secondly, in a larger sense, we need to do it because all the wealthier countries in the world, not just the United States, all of them are having great difficulty now, even in times of economic recovery, in creating new jobs. In the last decade, Europe had two big economic recovery periods, created virtually no new jobs, even though incomes were going up, profits were going up, new jobs were not coming into the economy.

In the last 2 or 3 years, that's started to happen in the United States. All during the 1980's, the largest companies in America downsized, just the way I'm trying to downsize the Federal Government. They had to do it to be more competitive. But in every year of the eighties, small business created more jobs than larger businesses lost. Then, the last couple of years, that whole trend came to a screeching halt. There were a lot of reasons: the recession, the cost of health

care, the credit crunch, the enormous cumulative cost of adding a new employee to a small-business work force.

In the last month, we had 365,000 new jobs. That's the good news. The bad news is that more than half of them were part-time jobs, jobs that didn't contain a full income and couldn't provide for health care coverage for the family. Every month now, because of the changing mix in our economy, 100,000 Americans are losing their health insurance. So there are severe problems in this economy that we have to address to create the jobs. Let me just mention a couple of things that we're trying to do, particularly to focus on small business.

We have announced a Governmentwide program with every Agency that regulates our financial institutions to try to end the credit crunch on small business and give banks the flexibility they need to make good loans to worthy customers in the small-business sector and to drastically, and I mean drastically, cut the paperwork required to access Government programs and to comply with the regulatory requirements.

We have proposed a program that would give small businesses—90 percent of the employers employing 40 percent of the people but providing way over half the new jobs—a permanent investment tax credit so that they'll always have more incentives to plow money back into the business.

We have taken steps to pass a budget which will contain billions of dollars in funds to help to deal with these terrible, terrible economic problems caused by defense cutbacks and base closings by not only retraining workers at very high levels but also providing joint ventures in new technologies so that defense contractors will have a fighting chance to get into technologies that have both civilian and defense uses, or entirely civilian uses, to create the jobs of the future.

These are just some of the things that have to be done to keep our eye on the ball. The purpose of bringing the deficit down is to make the economy work, which means we've got to both bring the deficit down and focus on these investments. We've got to change the nature of Federal spending: less consumption, more investment.

And finally, in order to get that done, we're going to have to face the health care crisis in America. It is projected that if we do nothing to change Government spending patterns on health care, listen to this, in 5 years, adding no new benefits—adding no new benefits—in 5 years, your tax bill for paying for Medicare and Medicaid will go from \$210 billion to \$350 billion, a 67 percent increase in 5 years with no new benefits, because of the explosion of health care costs and the explosion in the number of people who will be forced onto the public health care rolls as people cannot afford anymore to insure their employees.

This is a devastating blow to our efforts to reduce the deficit. If you want us to bring the budget into balance, you must insist that after we pass this budget, we move on to find a way to bring health costs in line with inflation and provide a basic package of health care to all of our people. Every other country in the world, except the United States, has figured out a way to do that. Let me tell you what will happen if we don't. By the end of the decade we'll be spending 20 percent of every dollar, 20 cents on the dollar, on health care. And none of our competitors will be over a dime, and we will be in a serious hole in terms of trying to be competitive. We also cannot balance the budget.

The flip side of that is if by working in partnership with providers, employers, and employee groups, we can bring health costs in line with inflation without sacrificing quality, we can emphasize preventive and primary care, we can provide a way for everybody to have basic coverage, we can guarantee people that they won't lose their health insurance if somebody in their family's been sick, or if their own business goes down, if we can do that, we can free up hundreds of billions of dollars.

If you look at the projected increases in health care costs, bringing health costs in line with inflation would do more to stimulate the private economy, even in keeping interest rates down, and much more than any tax cut or any Government spending program we can hope to put out there. So that is the next big challenge for us. But first we've got to pass the economic program.

So I ask all of you today to bring to your views of the National Government the spirit that I see in Atlanta: the idea that the Government and the business sector ought to be in a partnership, the idea that there's a difference between investment and consumption, the idea that you can't run from your problems so you might as well face them and try to do something about them and make progress on them. Those are the things that I saw in that child care center here today. That is the spirit that brought the Olympics to Atlanta. That is the spirit behind the old motto you had when my State had its misfortune in the racial crisis in 1957 and Atlanta called itself "the city that was too busy to hate."

That is what you have to do as a citizen of the United States: Support the Members of the Congress that are up there trying to get something done. Support the idea that we can reduce the deficit and increase investment and create jobs. Support the idea that gridlock is not good for anybody except people who like to hear the gears squeal. Support the idea that we have to change in order to renew the American dream.

We are moving in the right direction. Last night was an exhilarating first step. But believe me, you can ask any Member of the United States Congress, they did not count that a victory for themselves last night: It was a victory for you. They know that they will do only what they believe you want them to do. The people of this country are back in the driver's seat; it's time to put your foot on the accelerator and stay in the middle of the road.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. at the Apparel Mart. In his remarks, he referred to Virgil R. Williams, president and chief executive officer, Williams Communications, Inc.; John Portman, chairman, Portman Companies; Sam Williams, president, Atlanta Market Center; Peg Canter, general manager, Apparel Mart; Doug Miller, general manager, Atlanta Market Center Trade Shows; Zell Miller, Governor of Georgia; Andrew Young, chief executive officer, Law International, and former Mayor of Atlanta; and Max Cleland, Georgia Secretary of State. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 6537—Women's History Month, 1993

March 19, 1993

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As we celebrate Women's History Month, we reflect on the American women who throughout history have proudly served in shaping the spirit of our Nation.

Women like Harriet Tubman, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Sojourner Truth embraced the struggle for human freedom, dignity, and justice. They opposed slavery and inequality at critical moments in history. Their courageous leadership helped pave the way for future generations who would strive to secure equal rights for women.

We are inspired by women like Jane Addams, the first female Nobel prize winner, who at the turn of the century founded Chicago's Hull House to help newly arrived immigrants adapt to a foreign culture. We admire women such as Belva Lockwood, who became the first woman admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court in 1879. And we cannot forget the long struggle of women like Frances Perkins, whose work to protect the health and safety of America's workers culminated in her service as Secretary of Labor, the Nation's first woman Cabinet officer.

These courageous and pioneering women worked tirelessly to achieve new opportunities for all. Today, empowered by this great legacy, American women serve in every aspect of American life, from social services to space exploration. The opportunities for American women are growing, and their efforts as mothers and volunteers, corporate executives and senators, police officers and administrators, construction workers and cab drivers, and teachers and scientists enrich all of us and make our country great. Women continue to strengthen our Nation's social fabric as leaders in the home, the community, the workplace, and the government.

The challenges facing women in the next century are many. Families are increasingly called upon to care for their grown children and elderly relatives. Many women are com-