

yourselves and your children as we move into the next century, and we are all in your debt.

Men and women of the *Ike*, you have proved your capabilities time and again. In Haiti, you brought a new day to a people who thought they would never get it. You answered the call; you did the job; your country is proud of you.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. Paul D. Miller, commander in chief, U.S. Atlantic Command; Adm. William A. Owens, USN, Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Adm. William J. Flanagan, Jr., commander in chief, Atlantic Fleet; Adm. Daniel J. Murphy, Jr., commander, Cruiser Destroyer Group 8; and Capt. Mark Gemmill, commanding officer, U.S.S. *Dwight D. Eisenhower*.

### **Remarks at the Blue Ribbon Schools Ceremony**

*October 7, 1994*

Thank you very much for that wonderful welcome, increasingly rare around here these days. I just wanted to hear the Vice President say those lines from "A Man For All Seasons." [Laughter] They're wonderful, aren't they?

Let me say, as you know, we're about to wind up this session of Congress today, tomorrow, sometime in our lifetime, it will end. That's why I couldn't be here earlier today. But I did want to come by and say a heartfelt congratulations to all of you.

The Vice President and the Secretary of Education have already talked about what we're trying to do here, but I would like to put in a couple of sentences what I think is very important. It's hardly ever discussed in the common discussion, at least, of what goes in Washington. But we have been quietly, but effectively, trying to create a dramatic change in the relationship of the National Government to the schools of this country and to the teachers and to what is going on in education. It is a change rooted in the experiences that Secretary Riley and Deputy Secretary Kunin and I had as Governors and the hours and hours and hours that we all spent in public schools, listening to teachers,

watching people work in the schools, listening to parents.

We have made the Federal Government both more active in education and, yet, less meddlesome in trying to support what you are trying to do. We have tried to put the National Government on record in favor of globally competitive national standards of excellence in education but also in favor of getting out of the way and letting you achieve those standards of excellence in education. And this is a substantial departure. The "Elementary and Secondary Education Act" that just passed the Congress, overcoming the perennial filibuster problem, does just that. It provides targeted funding, more directed toward the areas of real need, but also provides for an enormous amount of flexibility for the schools so that every school can be a blue ribbon school. That, in the end, ought to be our objective in America.

So we will keep trying to do our job here. It will make a real difference that no child should ever walk away from going to college because of the cost, because under this new student loan program, you can have lower interest rates and longer repayment terms, and it can be geared to your salary so that if you want to be a schoolteacher or a police officer, something where you're not going to be rich, you can still afford to pay back that student loan. That will make a difference. It will make a difference in hundreds of thousands of more kids in Head Start; that by 1996, every child in this country under the age of 2 will be immunized; that'll make it easier for the kindergarten and the first grade teachers to do their job. Those things will make a difference.

But in the end, we know what will make the difference is you, the teachers, the parents, the principals, the people at the grass-roots level. All the magic of education is still in the human interplay that is a long way from Washington, DC. So we'll keep trying to do our job, but a big part of our job is making sure that you have, to use the new Washington buzzword, the empowerment necessary to do your job. That is our commitment to you; we will keep it. And I am glad to see your smiling faces here today.

Bless you all, and thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## **The President's News Conference**

*October 7, 1994*

**The President.** Good afternoon. Ladies and gentlemen, 20 months ago I came here to make a start and to make America work for ordinary citizens again, to take on some tough issues too long ignored and to get our economic house in order. There have been some tough fights along the way, but I believe they were the right fights for our future.

We came here with an economic strategy that was comprehensive and direct: reduce the deficit, expand trade, increase investment in people and technology, and reinvent the Government to do more with less. We pursued this strategy with discipline. Now we have fresh evidence that the national economic program we put into place last year is beginning to work for America.

The Department of Labor reported today that the unemployment rate fell to 5.9 percent, a 4-year low. And the economy has created about 4.6 million jobs since I took office. More jobs in high-wage industries were created this year alone than in the previous 5 years combined. It's not enough, of course. As the census report makes clear, there are still too many Americans working for low wages, living in poverty. There are places in rural and urban America where the recovery has not yet reached.

But if you look at the changes since just a few short years ago, when we were exporting jobs and exploding the deficit, there's a great difference. We're getting our economic house in order. Jobs are being created at home. We're moving in the right direction.

This Congress, as it concludes a difficult session, showed that it could make a difference for ordinary people when it put people and progress ahead of narrow interests and partisan obstruction. It didn't always happen, so let's begin with a look at the record, what's been done, what hasn't been done, where do we go from here. Let's begin with what was accomplished.

The economic plan passed, putting our house in order. It was historic deficit reduction led by cutting over \$255 billion in spending; cuts in 300 separate Government programs; raising taxes—or tax rates—on only the top 1.2 percent; cutting taxes for 15 million working families with 50 million Americans in them, people who work full-time but still hover just at the poverty line, so that people will always be encouraged to choose work over welfare and won't have to raise their children in poverty if they do.

We've broken down trade barriers, eliminated barriers to exports, passed NAFTA. Exports to Mexico are up 19 percent, exports of cars and truck up 600 percent in the last year.

They talked for more than a decade around here about making Government smaller, but it never seemed to happen. Well, now it is. Under our legislation we are shrinking Federal positions and cutting the Federal work force by 272,000, to its smallest size since the Kennedy administration. And now, again I say, private sector jobs are going up; the deficit is going down.

For the first time in a generation, we have taken a serious assault on crime, passing the Brady bill and the crime bill with its 100,000 prison cells, its 20 percent increase in police on the beat, its ban on assault weapons, its "three strikes and you're out," and other penalty laws.

The Government is beginning to work for ordinary citizens in important ways. That's what the family leave law was about. That's what the law which will provide immunizations for all children under 2 by 1996 is about. That's what Head Start for 200,000 more kids is about. That's what the national standards of educational excellence with more local control; apprenticeships for kids who don't go to college; national service, so people can earn money for college and serve their communities; and making college loans more affordable for 20 million people who can now have lower interest rates, lower fees, longer repayment schedule; it's what the empowerment zones and the community development banks to bring free enterprise to poor communities are about.

All of this was real progress. It's only a beginning, and more could have been done.