NOTE: The President spoke at 9:14 p.m. in the House Chamber of the Capitol.

Remarks at Kutztown University in Kutztown, Pennsylvania

January 25, 1995

The President. Thank you very much. You all sit down and relax. Cold outside, warm in here. I want to thank Dr. David McFarland for that introduction and for making me feel so very welcome here at Kutztown. I've had a great time already.

I know that before I came out, your Mayor, Mayor Schwoyer, and Congressman Holden who came up from Washington with me today, Secretary Reich and Secretary Riley talked, and I thank them for what they said. And I thank, especially, my colleagues, Congressman Holden and Secretary Reich and Secretary Riley for what they have done for the cause of education.

I am so happy to be here with all of you today. There are a lot of reasons I came here. One is, I'm beginning to feel old, and I heard that you've got a guy my age on your football team, and I wanted to—where is he? Where is Chuck Roseberry? Where is he? Stand up. Where are you? [*Applause*] I know he's here somewhere. Where are you? Yes. That's good.

You know, it's all I can do every morning to get up and go jog, and I resent you. I can't believe it. But I'm impressed. I'm also glad to be joined here by your former Congressman, Gus Yatron, and your former Senator, Harris Wofford. I thank them both for being here along with Catherine Baker Knoll, our State treasurer. Thank you, Catherine Baker Knoll, for coming—our State treasurer. I'm glad to see you, too. And our neighboring Congressman, Paul McHale, wanted to come but he could not. There's a very important vote this afternoon in the Congress, and the Congressman Holden has already gone back; besides, he's heard this speech before. [*Laughter*]

I want to say how very proud I am to be here, because this is a time of great challenge for our Nation, and I believe that this institution represents a big part of the answer to that challenge.

You know, just a few months ago, I had a brief roundtable with a lot of your community leaders, businesspeople, teachers, and students, who are associated with the efforts of this fine institution to help solve the problems of this area, to get an education to people, to help the businesses grow, to help start new businesses.

I wanted to come here because I was very, very impressed with your entrepreneurial development and global education center, the work you've done for small businesses, the work you've done for minority businesses, the work you've done to try to bring together people of all ages and all backgrounds who want to get an education, and who want to serve and who want to help. And I'd like to ask all these folks who just met with me to stand up, because I learned a lot from them, and I'm grateful for what they did. Would you all stand up, please? Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

There's one other group of people I'd like to acknowledge who are here who represent a lot of what I talked about last night, who are young people trying to serve our country at the grassroots level by helping people solve their problems. They are the members of the Pennsylvania Service Corps, part of AmeriCorps. They're working to help people build housing, to reduce neighborhood violence, to clean up the local environment, to help people with AIDS. Busloads of them are here, and you just heard from them. [*Laughter*] I thank them for their enthusiasm, their devotion to their country, and for symbolizing what I think all of us have to do more of: learn and gain by serving and giving.

You know, this is a beautiful rural area. I understand I am the first President since 1948 to come to this county, and the first person ever to visit this community as President. And I am delighted to be here.

Pennsylvania as a whole, and this area have been through dramatic and sweeping economic changes in the last several years. The economic opportunity that made Pennsylvania one of the great manufacturing States of America and one of the great economic powers of the entire post-cold-war world have changed; those forces have changed dramatically. And as those of you who are younger

enter your adult years and look forward to the future, you know that we have moved from an industrial age to an information age; you will hear it everywhere.

What you may not hear is that it does not mean that manufacturing will be less important. Quite the contrary, if we do it right, it means that America will continue to be the leading manufacturing country in the world. But more and more and more, manufacturing will require more knowledge, higher skills, a better education, fewer people producing more things, which means that education will be important, and it will also be important for us to continually be able to start more and more new businesses.

Big enterprises are like the Federal Government: we're downsizing. We're making the Federal bureaucracy smaller so we can give the money back to you to educate people, to provide tax relief, to bring the deficit down, to fight crime. That's what we're doing. That is very, very important. It matters to your future that Federal debt is now $10,000 a family less than it would have been if our deficit reduction plan had not passed. It matters that the economic programs have helped to contribute to this enormous rise in productivity in America. And we have over 6 million new jobs in our country now in the last 2 years, with low inflation and with every prospect of continuing our growth.

But what's going to enable us to solve our problems over the long run is the ability and strength of the American people to solve their problems at the local level, to make the most of their own lives, and to work together in communities. I said last night in my speech, and I will say again today, that I believe what our country needs is a New Covenant based on an old idea, the idea that, with opportunity must come responsibility. They have to go hand in hand. If you don't have both, you can't solve the problems of America.

If you tell people to be responsible all the time and they never get any benefit out of it, pretty soon they get tired and quit. But if people just always say, I want my rights, and we don't think about what responsible conduct is for ourselves and our friends and neighbors, then pretty soon our society comes apart. We have to have both. And we have to base our efforts in community after community after community where people can sit down, the way these people did with me today, and talk to each other and work with each other to develop the God-given potential of all of our people.

In the world we are moving into, the success of the United States as a whole will be more dependent than ever before on the success of every community to educate and develop the capacities of every person who lives in the community, everywhere and everyplace. We don't have a person or a community we can walk away from and turn our backs on.

That's why, even though we've been cutting Government spending—and last year for the first time in 25 years, we cut both defense and domestic spending, except for Medicare and the health programs of the Government and Social Security, of course—we cut domestic and defense spending for the first time in 25 years to deal with the deficit.

But we did not cut education. We expanded Head Start. We expanded our efforts to help our public schools achieve educational excellence. We set up a program to try to support networks like the ones I saw today, for businesses to work with schools to help young people who don't go to 4-year colleges at least get some education and training after high school, so they can get better jobs and have higher incomes. We reformed the college loan program so that student loans now are less costly to middle class students, have better repayment terms, and they actually cost the Government less in terms of tax dollars. It is a good program.

And with all of that, let me remind you of what the fundamental facts are in this economy and why these efforts are so important. Even though we had 6 million new jobs in the economy in the last 2 years, even though we had more high-wage jobs coming back into our economy in 1994 than in the last 5 years combined, most Americans are working a longer work week than they were working 15 years ago for about the same income once you make adjustments for inflation.

Most of our people have found that this new exciting global economy, which moves with lightning speed and opens up vast op-

portunities for people who can take advantage of it, has left them working harder for less, with less security. All these changes are great if you can always get a new job, but if you're the one losing the job, the change doesn't look very good.

So what our job is, is to make more success stories, like the programs I see here. It is to empower more schools to do what this one did, to drop their categories and open their walls and reach out to all kinds of people, and make education a community enterprise and a lifetime enterprise. That is what we must do.

And that is why I say to the American people and to the Congress, we have gotten the deficit down, and we have gotten the economy going, and there are more cuts we can make in Government spending, and we can afford to provide some more tax relief to hard-working Americans, but we should do it with a focus on education so that we can raise people's incomes who have worked harder for less in the short run with the tax relief, but in the long run with better education, which is the only way to raise people's incomes over the long run.

You think about the things that this country's done in our past that really did something for the economy. I think you can make a compelling case that, at the end of World War II, the passage of the GI bill did more to explode the American economy than any other single action, because it made it possible for our returning servicemen to go back to school and to get an education. And that money has repaid itself many times over.

So I have said that that's the kind of thing we ought to focus on now. The middle class bill of rights that I proposed last night to the American people and to Congress—and as I said, it might better be called a middle class bill of rights and responsibilities because you, by definition, have to be responsible to take the benefits of it—focuses heavily on education in three ways, and I want to emphasize them.

First of all, I think you ought to be able to deduct the cost of education after high school from your taxes. You think about it: If you own a home, you can deduct interest from your taxes. And in the early years of a home mortgage, it's almost all interest. Why do we do that? Because we want people to be able to own their homes. If you run a business and you invest in new equipment, you can deduct the cost from your taxes. Why do we do that? Because we want our businesses to modernize. You know, the stories I heard over here before I came out were, the cost of equipment is going up dramatically, but now we can produce more with fewer people. We've got to support that.

But if our people today can't get an education—not everybody needs a 4-year college degree—but if they can't get an education, if the systems aren't there for that education, they may not get to the homeowning. They may not have the American dream that we want. So I say, if education is the most important thing for personal success in the 21st century, we ought to permit people to deduct the cost of it from their taxes: Raise your income in the short run; raise your income in the long run.

Audience Member. That's right, Bill! [*Applause*]

The President. That's right. You know, we flew that person up here from Washington, and I was beginning to think they weren't going to say anything. [*Laughter*]

The second thing I want to say is, we want to broaden the number of Americans who can invest tax-free in an IRA, an individual retirement account, but we want to let people withdraw from the IRA, tax-free, to pay for education expenses, so that you can take better care of yourself.

The last education component is, we want to take about 70 different programs the Federal Government runs in training, which require enormous administrative costs, collapse them and give the money to the American people who are eligible for them. So if a person loses a job and is on unemployment, or if a person is in a lower wage job so they're eligible for Federal training help, instead of having to figure out which of 70 programs you qualify for, you just get a voucher of $2,600 a year—up to that—for 2 years, and you take it to this school, or take it to a local community college or take it wherever you choose if you're eligible to get it. It's a kind of a GI bill for American workers. It will make a huge difference. And it's the kind of thing Government ought to be doing: less

bureaucracy, more direct help to people to get the education and training they need to grow and to learn.

I want all of you to help me do this for you. We are trying to change the focus of the National Government to the grassroots of America. There are a lot of other things that I will be talking about over the next few weeks that are part of this New Covenant, welfare reform, what we're going to do in crime to lower the crime rate and implement the crime bill, what we're going to do to try to grow the economy, and other ways. But nothing, nothing can make a bigger difference than trying to get more education and more people in more ways. So I hope that you will do two things: first, I hope you will say, with your voices, without regard to your party, ''Cut the deficit. Cut spending. Reduce the size of the Federal bureaucracy. Keep on doing what you're doing, but do not cut education. Increase investment and education so we can grow this economy and grow America.'' And I hope you will support the middle class bill of rights, and I hope you will support the AmeriCorps program in Pennsylvania, and I hope you will support—[*applause*]—I hope you will support the programs at this school to develop entrepreneurs because they're all grassroots community-building programs that develop the ability of people to fulfill their own dreams and bring us together across the lines that divide us.

You know, I don't have an—literally, I don't have a clue about which of the people I was sitting and talking with this morning were Democrats, which were Republicans, who was an Independent. I don't have any idea who they voted for in the last election. I probably should have checked. [*Laughter*] I mean, I don't. Why? Why? Because they are organized around developing the potential of the people here. They have built a community of interest where everybody wins by helping everybody else. Now, that's what makes America go. That's what makes America grow. I see it when I visited these community services programs. I see it, as I said last night in my speech, when I go out after a disaster. I mean, it's a terrible thing to say, but if you go to one of these places where they're putting sand bags on a levee against a flood or where they're trying to help people deal with the aftermath of the fires, as I saw in California, the earthquakes, people have their shoulders back and their heads held high and their eyes are clear and their voices are strong. Why? Because they know they matter.

And when Americans get in trouble, you know, we would take the shirt off our back for people. And we fight, and we work in these things, because we know we matter, because we're doing something that makes us feel better and stronger and we're helping other people as well. We have to return that spirit to our country every day, in every way, in all of our activities. That is what this is all about, and we can do that.

So what I want to say to you is, we've got a lot of economic challenges, and we've got some profound social problems. But we can deal with them, we can solve them, we can move on them. I see it—I have seen all over this country. I am telling you, there is not a problem this country has that is not being addressed in a way that all of you will be proud of by somebody, somewhere. What we have to do is to figure out a way to galvanize and organize and energize all of that work so that it spreads across our whole country.

The New Covenant is a way of thinking about that. Responsibility in return for opportunity, building this country at the community level, that's what I'm committed to doing. My role in that will be in this coming Congress to try to pass the middle class bill of rights, to try to emphasize education, to try to keep downsizing the Federal Government and controlling the deficit and cutting unnecessary spending, but building up those things which will enable people to make the most of their own lives. That is my job.

Your job is to support institutions like this to get all the education you can to break down the walls between business and government and education at the grassroots level and to try to help me pass this. Would you do that? I need you. I hope you will, and I want your support for it. [*Applause*]

Folks, the best days of this country are still before us. This is the most exciting era we have ever known. You are going to see opportunities in the next 20 years for people to make a living in exciting and interesting ways that we could not have imagined 20 years

ago. But our job is to make sure that, as President Kennedy said, ''the rising tide lifts all boats.'' We can't have an America where 20 or even 40 percent of us are the only ones that really do well in this global economy, and it need not be that way.

But if we want our best days to lie ahead, we have got to—we have got to say we are going to get an education for all of our people. It's going to be a lifetime project. Our educational institutions are going to become the center of our communities. We're going to tear down the walls that divide us. We're going to make education available to everybody, and we're going to use the power of Government not to expand or create a new bureaucracy but to empower people at the grassroots level to chart their own future and to make their own lives in this new and exciting age.

That is our mission. If we do it, our best days are ahead. I want that more than anything for you, for our children, and our grandchildren and our country. And I can tell you, the world still needs that. There are a lot of things out there in the rest of the world that are still a threat to decency and humanity and progress. You saw this terrible terrorist attack in the Middle East the last couple of days. The world needs a strong America, and Americans deserve it. And we're going to get it with your help.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:36 p.m. in the fieldhouse. In his remarks, he referred to David McFarland, president of the university, and Mayor James Schwoyer of Kutztown.

Remarks to University Presidents

January 26, 1995

Well, good morning. I'm delighted to see all of you, and most of you, I'm delighted to see you again. We're glad to have you at the White House. As all of you know, in the State of the Union, I did my best to restate my vision for our country and the role of education and educational institutions in that vision.

The job of every American at the close of the 20th century is to do what we can to guarantee that, as we move to the next century, the American dream will be available to all of our people, and that our country will remain the world's strongest force for freedom and democracy. That means, to use my formulation, that we have to make some profound changes in our country which will require a New Covenant of commitment to opportunity and to responsibility, a commitment to the strength of our communities and the work of citizenship. We have to empower our people to make the most of their own abilities. We have to expand opportunity without expanding bureaucracy in the information age, and we have to enhance our security at home as well as abroad.

The work of education does all that, and helps us to strengthen our communities at the grassroots level. And as I said the other night, the middle class bill of rights I've proposed should be called the bill of rights and responsibilities, because as all of you know well, you can't give somebody an education, you can only give them the opportunity for an education. It's something that people have to seize for themselves.

In the last 2 years, we've made remarkable progress on the education front, from expanding Head Start to passing the Goals 2000 program. It's promoting reforms within our public schools, like charter schools and the character education movement that the Secretary of Education has done so much to promote, to promoting the partnerships from school to work for the young people who don't go to universities, to dramatically changing the student loan program in ways that have lowered the cost of the loans, improved the repayment options for students, cut down on the paperwork for institutions of higher education, and miraculously lowered the cost of Federal Government as well.

I'm very pleased with all this, but as all of you know, we still have a lot to do. I want to talk a little bit today about the middle class bill of rights and a couple of other issues that are very, very important. To emphasize the importance of the bill to me, I'd just ask us all to remember that, as exciting as this new world is for all of us, most Americans are still working a longer work week for the same or lower wages than they were making 15 years ago. There is an education premium in this new economy that is greater than has