to jail our way out of this crisis. We cannot do that. We will not be able to jail our way out of this crisis. If people hurt other people and they're serious threats to society, they ought to be put in jail for a long time. But we cannot solve the crime problem by making prison guards the fastest growing employment category in the United States of America.

We need you. That is ultimately my message to you. We're going to have the best drug strategy we can possibly have with General McCaffrey. We're going to have the best anti-gang strategy we can possibly have with the Attorney General. We're going to keep supporting community policing with the great team she has put together, and we're not going to give these cities any hassles, these counties any hassles when they're trying to get this job done. We will be supporting them.

But if you really want an America where crime is the exception, not the rule again, it's going to take you, too. We cannot do it unless people, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, say, ''There's somebody that shouldn't be in this neighborhood.'' ''There's an abandoned car that might have drugs or weapons in it.'' ''There's a child that needs a helping hand.'' You have to do that. We have got to have your help.

I ask you to think about this as I close. We're here in this high school, this old, old high school—although this beautiful new auditorium—and you think about the life you want these young people who are coming out of this high school to live. Imagine all the possibilities that will be there. By the year 2000 we've got a plan to hook up every classroom in America and every library in America to the worldwide Internet. You'll have kids in Louisville who live in public housing projects getting into libraries in Australia to do research about volcanoes. It will be amazing.

You'll have people able to travel the world and do things that people 20 or 30 years ago would never even have dreamed of being able to do. It will be very exciting. But they won't be free. No matter how modern, how fancy, how wonderful it is, they won't be free unless crime is the exception rather than the rule. And that won't happen unless all of us do our part to make sure those kids get to live up to their God-given abilities.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:32 p.m. in the auditorium of the Male High School. In his remarks, he referred to County Judge/Executive David Armstrong and Principal Joseph Burks, Jr.

Remarks to the U.S. Conference of Mayors

January 25, 1996

Mayor Rice; Mayor Daley; Mayor Helmke, my old classmate, it's good to see you here. Mr. Vice President, you are the only person in the country that could have transformed a straight man routine into the best comedy act in America. [*Laughter*]

I used to be able to be on a platform with someone I liked, and when they cracked a joke, I'd just write it down. And when no one else was looking I would use it. [*Laughter*] All of his jokes are now so carefully bound to the persona he has created—[*laughter*]—they aren't stealable. They don't even need to be patented anymore. [*Laughter*]

We are, all of us, very glad to have you here. I speak for Secretary Cisneros, Secretary Peña, for Carol Browner. We're glad to have you here in your house.

I want to say a word of thanks to Tom Cochran for being a good representative of your interests and your concerns and of working so closely with Marcia Hale and others here in the White House. I want to thank you for the work you do every day and for, so many of you, who have made me feel welcome over the last 3 years as I've come to your cities.

As I said in the State of the Union a couple of days ago, the state of the Union is strong. We have the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation we've had in 27 years. We've had 7.8 million new jobs. Those big numbers don't mean much to people; they really want to know how they are doing in their communities; how is it on my block? But I think we can take some encouragement from knowing that the unemployment rate has dropped 3½ percent in Detroit; it's about 4½ percent total in Chicago; it's dropped to

under 5 percent in Philadelphia; 2 percent decline in Los Angeles; 2½ percent decline in New York. We could go through city and city and community after community to say that. That is good news.

It is good news that our country is helping peace to take root around the world, from the Middle East to Bosnia. It is good news that all over our country we see a lot of the social indicators that have troubled so many of us for so long turning around. The crime rate, the welfare rolls, the food stamp rolls, the poverty rate, the teen pregnancy rate, all down over the last 2 to 3 years. That is very, very good news.

But we also know that we've got a lot of work to do. And we know the world is changing very quickly. And we know that there are an awful lot of Americans that have not been privileged to participate in this recovering economy. And we know that saying that all these things are going down masks the fact that the crime rate, the welfare rolls, the food stamp rates, the poverty rolls, the teen pregnancy rates, they're all still far too high, unacceptably high.

In the State of the Union Address, as I was preparing for it, I really tried to say to myself, if I were in anybody's living room, what would I say to them. If I were just talking to one family about what the future of our country would be like 5 years from now, 10 years from now, 20 years from now, what is it I would say that we have to do to keep the American dream alive for all of our people, to keep this country coming together and moving together around its basic values, and to maintain the leadership of the United States in the world?

That is what I tried to talk about on Tuesday night. I think we should start with our families because we know now that families that work together and stay together are almost never in poverty. We know that their children are far less likely to have the problems which have consumed so much of our time and our emotions and so much of the public treasure.

An important of helping our families is passing the right kind of welfare reform, not the wrong kind of welfare reform. I believe, since almost every parent in America has to work to make ends meet, whether in a one- or a two-parent household, it is perfectly acceptable to require people on welfare who can work to work. I think we ought to do that. We ought to be moving people from dependence to independence. But it's also important to remember that we want people to succeed as parents and as workers, and that all of us have—our first job is to our children.

That's why I say that I hope we can reach a bipartisan agreement on a welfare reform bill that will be very tough when it comes to work requirements and time limits and child support enforcement but will understand we need adequate child care, and we need adequate support for those children because what we really want in America is for every single parent to be able to succeed at home and at work.

The second great challenge we have is to provide our people with the educational opportunities they need for the 21st century. The 1990 Census had, if you went through all of the data, it had one stunning piece of information that I personally felt was the most important information I got out of the '90 Census. It was the first time we could see from 1990 and 1980, looking backward, one clear reason for the growing inequality in America. Why were so many middle class people working harder and harder and not getting ahead? Why was the rising tide not lifting all boats? If you look at the '90 Census, you will see Americans who had at least 2 years of education after high school tended to get jobs that they were able to keep, where the incomes tended to grow; those who didn't were in the other boat.

We have got to create a whole set of opportunities in education that will sustain the American dream for everyone. We've got to get more parents and teachers able to run their own schools and able to have flexibility from redtape, but they ought to have national standards of excellence and a recognized way of measuring it. And people should be held accountable for results—more flexibility to meet higher standards. And one of the things that we can do together, one of the things the National Government can do is to implement this initiative that the Vice President has worked with the telecommunications industry to develop to hook up every school

in every library in America to the Internet by the year 2000, every single classroom, and make sure that we not only have a hook-up, but that we have good software and skilled teachers, so that every single one of our children will be part of the information age. We're committed to that.

The third thing I think we have to recognize is that in this increasingly mobile economy we have to redefine what security means to a working family. It's amazing, the Fortune 500 companies keep laying off people, but there have been more people hired by just—only by businesses owned by women in the last 3 years than have been laid off by the Fortune 500. Interesting statistic. There is that much dynamism in this economy. And all this change is real exciting, unless—except in the times when you come out on the short end. Golly, elections are exciting, unless you don't win them. [*Laughter*] Then they're less interesting.

So the big picture is very exciting. But we have always recognized that the American people who are working hard and playing by the rules, obeying the law and doing the very best they could were entitled to some level of security.

Let me just give you one example about how the old security systems don't work. And a lot of you, particularly before you become public officials, I'm sure were involved in the unemployment system as employers or employees, where you paid—if you were an employer you paid tax to the unemployment system. The unemployment system was a great idea the way it worked for decades. You paid the money in, and then when times were tough and you had to lay your workers off they could at least draw a living wage, a little less than they were making but a living wage until you called them back.

For decades, 85 percent of the people who were laid off from work were called back to the job from which they were laid off. Today, over 80 percent of the people who are laid off are not called back to the job from which they were laid off because of the changes in the economy. So how do we deal with that?

For decades people had a pension they could rely on in addition to Social Security if they worked for a big company because they knew they'd go to work for one company, and they'd stay there until their work career was over. And the same thing with health insurance. But a million people in America lost their health insurance in the last 2 years, and we've had real trouble trying to maintain the integrity of pension systems. In December of 1994, an almost unanimous vote of the Congress in both parties basically stabilized the pensions of 8 million Americans that were in real trouble and 32 million more that could have gotten in trouble.

So how are we going to define this kind of security for the working families that you represent? I think, at a minimum, we have to do the following things:

We have to give people access to affordable health insurance that they don't lose when they change jobs or when somebody in their family gets sick. And there's a bipartisan bill before the Congress today which they could adopt which would do that.

Secondly, we ought to recognize that people know their own best interests when they're laid off, and we ought to do what we can to move help to them as quickly as possible. And what I favor doing is collapsing 70 of the Government's training programs, which were each developed for little problems—collapse them, put the big pot of money there, and when somebody in your community is laid off or is grossly underemployed and they would qualify for these training programs, instead of having to figure out what training program for which they should sign up, just send them a voucher and let them go to the local community college or whatever training institute is there.

Then the third thing I think we have to do is to figure out a way to make it easier for small businesses, and farmers particularly, to take out their own pension plans for themselves and their employees. There's a bill in the Congress today—it hardly costs any money, but it would make some changes. I think it was one of the top of the three or four priorities of the White House Conference on Small Business. It would make some changes which would make it possible for almost every business that could possibly afford to do it, including a lot of them that cannot even afford the legal costs today, to begin a pension program.

So these are good beginnings. And they would strengthen your communities by enabling your families that are working out there in this more dynamic economy to succeed.

The fourth thing we have to do is do a better job of helping you to bring the crime rate down. But you—this is a great success story in America. The crime rate is going down in most communities in this country, thanks to the efforts that you and your police chiefs, your police officers, and your community leaders are making. Finally, a couple of weeks ago there was a big cover story in one of our major magazines acknowledging that, saying we can have some hope that we can drive crime down.

Yesterday I was with Mayor Abramson in Louisville, and we sat and talked to the citizens and the community police officers that were working together in Louisville. Just a few days ago I was with Mayor Lanier in Houston. We were conducting a funeral service for our friend Barbara Jordan. And he was telling me about the work that they have done there to drive down juvenile crime. They have 3,000 young people in a soccer program. And 2,500 of them get their uniforms and shoes from the city. They are kids that would never otherwise be able to afford to participate in that sort of activity.

These things are going on all over our country, and we are taking our streets back. And I want to say a little bit about this because this is—the model we've had together in fighting crime is the model that I believe we should try to replicate in other places. We've worked together. We passed the crime bill of 1994. We passed the Brady bill. That needed to be a national law, uniform standards; 44,000 people with criminal records have not gotten handguns as a result of it. We passed the assault weapons ban. That needed to be a national law. It wouldn't be worth—you know, a city ordinance on assault weapons? A State law on assault weapons? It wouldn't have worked.

We passed the crime bill, and we said, "Okay, this money can only be used for police," but that needed to be a national standard. Why? Because for 30 years we saw the violent crime rate triple and the aggregate size of America's police force only went up 10 percent. But the Attorney General worked very hard to clean away all the sort of bureaucratic hassles to getting the money. No one said—the cities decided whom to hire, how to train them, where they'll be deployed, how they'll work. The cities decide what the relationship with the communities are. You make all the decisions of any significance within the framework of saying, we've got to go to community policing; we've got to drive this crime rate down.

That is the kind of community-based partnership that I think ought to be the model. And the results are pretty hard to quarrel with, as all of you know. Now, the only thing I want to say about that is we have made progress bringing the crime rate down, but everybody knows it's still too high. You go out and interview any 20 citizens in America, and they'll tell you it's still one of their deepest concerns.

We have to keep working on this. What should our goal be? Our goal should be to make crime the exception rather than the rule. It's a simple goal. Our goal should be to make crime the exception rather than the rule so that people feel comfortable when their kids are on the street playing, people aren't afraid to walk down the street to the movie. We know that we will never abolish crime in America. You will never take—we can't transform what is inside every human being, but we could go back to a time when it's the exception rather than the rule. And we have to keep working until we achieve that goal.

The other challenges that I put before the country were, obviously, the important ones that you've worked on: to make sure that we continue to protect the environment and that we find even more ways to grow the economy while we're cleaning up the environment instead of the reverse; to maintain our country's leadership in the world; and to give our Government greater and greater and greater capacity to do more while it costs less and serve the people better.

And we don't have—the era of big Government is over, but the era of strong, effective Government in partnership with people is not over. We're not going back to a time when people can fend for themselves. Why do people come to cities in the first place? What do cities give people? The ability to

make more of their lives together than they could if they were apart. I mean, the whole concept of cities is the symbol of what it is we ought to be trying to do in America. People live together because they think they'll all be better off than if they were all out somewhere else by themselves.

That is the idea. And that is, to me, the model that we ought to all have in our minds of what the role of Government ought to be as we move into the 21st century, to make people to make more of their own lives, not to do anything for anybody that they ought to do for themselves but to help people make more of their own lives.

And that is the kind of partnership we have tried to have with you. It is very difficult to do that and to say you're doing it in Washington because everything here compulsively is filtered out to you through party politics, no matter how hard we try to avoid it. You don't have to worry about that quite as much as we do. I think it was Mayor LaGuardia who once said, ''There is no Republican or Democratic way to clean the streets.'' [*Laughter*] And I believe we need to take some of that wisdom and bring it back here. There is, yes, a Democratic and a Republican way to balance the budget. I understand that. But there is also a whole lot of overlap, and that's what we ought to be focused on.

So let me just mention four things very quickly that I know you'll be discussing here that I think ought to be the basis of our partnership within this framework that I outlined in the State of the Union.

First of all, I want to thank again the Vice President and Secretary Cisneros for the work they've done on the empowerment zones and the enterprise communities. We are trying to find ways to take the lessons we learned there and apply them to other communities. And as we work through this budget and next year's budget, I believe that there should be a bipartisan consensus to find ways to use the power of the Federal Government in ways that essentially help build public-private partnerships to redevelop our cities. And I would urge you to support that and to give us any other ideas you have for that.

We have the HOME initiative, which all of you are familiar with, which provides funds for you to build and rehabilitate houses for your citizens. We continue to strongly support the community development block grants. They've been around a long time, but they really are the symbol of what it is we're trying to do: Here are the subjects; you do it; be accountable at the end; if you mess up, we'll tell you, but otherwise why should we be telling you how to do all this. Those community development block grants have worked well for America. This is a stronger country because of the way that program worked.

We have, secondly—let me just make one other comment. I believe that the way the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development has worked with you on the problem of homelessness has worked well, too. You know how to move the homeless people off your streets. Every community has a slightly different homeless problem. And one of the things I would like to say is, while we do this budget, I know we're going to have to cut a lot of things, but I think we've made some real progress in dealing with homelessness in the last few years, and I think it would be a great mistake if we reverse that progress. I think it would be a great mistake if we reverse that progress. We need to continue to reduce the number of homeless people on our streets. This, again, should not be a partisan issue. I don't believe there is a single person in America that really believes that we should weaken our effort to do that.

The second thing we've done is to work on these community development banks. They're quite controversial now in the Congress because they seem like an easy thing to cut because they haven't been fully implemented. But if you look at the experience of the South Shore Development Bank in Chicago, or if you look at the experience of any of the other microenterprise loan programs that have been done in the United States, or if you look at how much our aid program has done in other countries, setting up development banks in places where they would be a lot harder to start than it would in most of your cities, it is obvious that if we had a source of capital to start more new businesses and small businesses, no matter if they're just one-person businesses, in a lot

of our poorest areas, we could grow the economy more quickly there than anyplace else.

What's the greatest opportunity for American business today? The distressed neighborhoods in our urban and rural areas. Where do the largest number of people live in America that we could use to expand the work force in a hurry, or to expand the number of our consumers in a hurry? In the distressed neighborhoods of our urban and isolated rural areas.

AID gave a $1-million grant several years ago to a Central American country to set up a loan program. An average loan was $300 apiece. That loan program now accounts for one percent of all of the jobs in that country, and the $1-million fund that AID put down there now has—there's $4 million in that bank account now. Those loans have been paid back several times with interest over and over again.

If we really believe that free enterprise and not Government spending is the answer to the problems of the inner city, we're going to have to give them some free enterprise. And free enterprise begins with capital. And there is lots and lots and lots of evidence that this can be successful. So I urge you to support that.

The third thing that I know is very important—I think more mayors have mentioned this to me than any other single issue—is our Brownfields initiative, and I want to thank Carol Browner for the work that she has done on it. We were getting ready to come over here, and I was preparing it and I said we ought to call this Browner's Brownfields. [*Laughter*] It sounds like a kids' softball team, you know? It was great.

This is a very important thing. If we can get these vacant spaces that you have to put fences around, that basically divide neighborhoods and are inviting targets for all kinds of destructive things, to turn back into safe, sustainable economic endeavors we could do more in less time, with less money to move our cities forward than nearly anything else we can do. So we want to help communities clean up old waste sites by giving tax incentives to those who will buy and clean them up. We want to clear away regulatory burdens. We want to do whatever we can to support you.

But I know that the mayors have been on this issue, and I just want to assure you that we want to be there with you. And I believe, again, we can build broad bipartisan support for the Brownfields initiative.

The fourth thing that I want to comment on is the reinvention of HUD that Mayor Cisneros is overseeing. I call him "mayor" when he starts talking to me about this. HUD has now got 81 field offices. They've moved huge numbers of people out of Washington. They're collapsing their divisions down to four basic programs. For communities of over 150,000 there will be a single point of contact in the community so you can do all your business in one place. Grants that once required 12 separate applications will now require only one.

So that's the kind of flexibility that I think we ought to have. Our goal is to reach, by the year 2000, 67½ percent homeownership in America. We're already at a 15-year high right now. We're moving. And if we can keep going in this direction and you'll help us and we work together we can get up to the point where 67½ percent of the people are in their own homes. That has never happened in the United States before. And that, again, will carry with it a certain amount of economic growth and development in all your communities.

And let me just say one other word since Secretary Peña is here. We have been quite successful and, again, have had a good support from the Congress in our efforts to maximize the amount of money we're putting out through the Department of Transportation in communities for infrastructure development. That's one place where we have worked together with hardly a hitch. And because we have it's attracted hardly any notice. [*Laughter*] But we're moving in the right direction there, and I want to thank you for doing that.

So these are the things that we believe we can do with you. And I hope that they will be symbolic and will exemplify the kind of partnership that will take this country a long way down the road.

Let me just say one other thing about the budget. Since I gave the State of the Union Address, there have been some encouraging things said by the congressional leaders about

the prospects of our getting a budget agreement and continuing to work to bring the deficit down. But I would remind you that we still have some roadblocks in the way that I think need to be cleared away.

I urge Congress to keep the Government open and to pass the straightforward continuing resolution until we pass the rest of the appropriations bills for this year.

We've also seen news that just today—of the serious consequences that could result if the Congress was to default on the debt limit. No mayor would ever consider doing such a thing. The repercussions would be far too harmful. And the Congress should not, either. Congress must choose not to shut the Government down again, and must choose to honor the full faith and credit of the United States.

We are a very great nation, and we are a very great nation not just because we're big, not just because we're wealthy, and not just because we've got a powerful military. It's because people know that we stand for certain things. They know we can be trusted. They know we keep our word.

When the United States of America borrowed that money, the United States gave its word it would honor its obligations. And we should not, under any circumstances, for any reason, ever, ever, not a single one of us, break the word of the United States of America.

Let me say, too, to all of you, I have been very honored to fight the battles that we have fought together, across party lines, for the crime bill, to end unfunded mandates. You have been a source of great inspiration to me. But this organization has been a source of inspiration for progressive, positive change ever since you convinced a reluctant President Hoover to sign a municipal assistance bill in the Depression.

So I ask you to keep working with us. Help us to pass the "Community Flexibility Act." Help us to protect the community development banks. Help us to support the reform of HUD. Help us to get real welfare reform. Help us to keep the crime rate coming down. Help us to do these things. We can do these things if we do them together.

The cities are the model. Why did people begin to live in cities? Because they knew instinctively they could do things together that they could never do on their own. America can do what we have to do if we do it together. And the mayors, the cities, the community leaders can lead the way.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:02 p.m., in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Conference of Mayors officers Mayor Norm Rice, Seattle, WA, president; Mayor Richard Daley, Chicago, IL, vice president; Mayor Paul Helmke, Fort Wayne, IN, advisory board chair; and John Thomas Cochran, executive director.

Statement on the Resignation of Roger Johnson as Administrator of General Services

January 25, 1996

I learned of Roger Johnson's resignation as Administrator of the General Services Administration with deep regret. He served his country with distinction over the last 3 years, bringing a common-sense approach and let's-get-down-to-business style to the GSA.

He worked closely with the Vice President and the staff of the National Performance Review to implement real reforms at the GSA. Because of his work, today's GSA provides better service with a smaller bureaucracy and lower operating costs. We will continue to build on the work Roger started.

At a time when all Americans need to come together and confront our common challenges, we need people like Roger Johnson—a long-time Republican, a business leader—more than ever. Even as he leaves the Government, I hope public servants everywhere remember his example: to put partisan differences aside and work for the common good.

Hillary and I wish Roger and Janice nothing but the best as they return to California. I am deeply gratified by his kind words and look forward to working with Roger in the months ahead.