

Ms. Hinders. Well, as we draw to a close, Senator Harkin, do you have any additional comments that you'd like to add?

Senator Harkin. Do you have any students in the Head Start program?

Q. We do.

Senator Harkin. You do?

Q. Yes.

Senator Harkin. Good for you.

Ms. Hinders. This has been a pleasure to have you here today, Mr. President. We have enjoyed coming together as a group to talk to you about an issue that we really have a passion for. And we can tell that you do, too. So, on behalf of Drake and our entire community, thank you.

The President. Thank you, and good luck to all of you.

NOTE: The roundtable began at 12:45 p.m. in the Knapp Center at Drake University.

Remarks to the Community in Des Moines

February 11, 1996

Thank you so much. First let me thank all of you for making me feel so welcome. It was a wonderful feeling just to come into this room today and see you full of energy and commitment and conviction, and apparently, pretty happy. I liked it, and I thank you.

I want to thank President Ferrari, and your Young Democrats president, Sherry Desing, and your student body president, Sandy Marshall, who met me outside, and all the people from Drake who have played any role in this. I want to thank the Knapp Center event staff. And I want to say a special word of thanks to the band, who played so well today and did such a good job.

I thank Amber Schafer for her wonderful introduction and for embodying what a lot of this election is all about—your future and your hopes and your dreams.

I thank Mayor Davis for being here. We've known each other a long time. I was thrilled when he got elected mayor, and I think he's doing a fine job for you, and I'm glad he's here. I want to thank two other Iowans, one of whom is not here and one of whom is, who have been a big part of our administra-

tion. The one who is absent is your former attorney general, Bonnie Campbell. She directs our Office of Violence Against Women, and we are doing a good job finally bringing America's attention to the problems of domestic violence and violence against women. And I want to thank the other public servant in the Harkin family, Ruth Harkin, the President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, for doing a magnificent job in promoting our economic interests around the world. And, finally, let me say, Tom Harkin and I have been together all weekend and that's the third time I've heard him tell those jokes, and they get funnier every time he tells them. [Laughter]

You know, if you do this as long as I have you have the privilege, sometimes the burden, of hearing a lot of people speak, watching a lot of people work. And I want every person in Iowa to know, whether you're a Democrat or a Republican or an independent, there is not a single, solitary soul in the Congress of the United States that every day works harder to do what he believes is right to the very core of his being than Tom Harkin of Iowa. And on some of the long, cold days and weeks of 1995, it was immensely reassuring to have him in the Senate speaking up for what we believe is right.

Let me say to all of you, I'm delighted to be here on the eve of the caucuses. I want you to go for all the reasons that Senator Harkin said. I have a selfish, entirely personal reason for wanting you to go. All my life, since I was a little boy I've heard about the Iowa caucuses. I've waited for the returns to come in. In 1992, I couldn't seem to get many votes in the Iowa caucus. This is my last chance, and I would really like to do well. I would appreciate it if you would do that.

Let me thank not only Amber, but the other young students and their parents and their employers who met with me just a few moments ago when we discussed the work-study program as you were coming in here, because they really represent what this election is all about.

You know, people descend on Iowa every 4 years and they try to discern what new development is going on in national politics, and that makes the election. That's what the election is all about. And this year I read all

these columns and I see all this news coverage on whether the ads are more important than the grassroots campaigning, or the negative ads becoming more influential. Let me tell you something, folks: Every election is about you. Not us, not those of us who run—but those of you—this makes you the boss. This is about your responsibilities. This is about your opportunities. It's about your future. It's about your Nation. It's about what kind of country we're going to have. It is your election, and it's about you, and don't you ever forget it. It is your chance to chart your future.

This is an election that is full of perplexities, or a time full of perplexities. I've watched the signs. I saw a job sign up there and I've seen some very generous, nice signs about what we're trying to do. I like the "My President" one. Thank you very much, young man.

Let me give you some perplexing things to think about, sort of the good news of this moment. I said in the State of the Union Address that this is a time of great possibility, and it is. But it's also a time of great challenge. And sometimes you read about what is going on in the country and you think, well, that's inconsistent with my experience; why are all these things happening?

Let me just go through the areas that I ran for President to address. I said in 1992 that I was running because I wanted to restore the American dream for every citizen in this country willing to work for it, because I wanted our country to be the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and because I wanted us to come together and not be divided. I am tired of people trying to divide the American people for their own interests instead of unite us for our common interests.

Now, that is still our mission. How are we doing? Look at the economy. In the last 3 years we have nearly 8 million more jobs; we have a big drop in the unemployment rate in Iowa, as well as throughout the country; we have a 15-year high in homeownership; we have—the so-called "misery index," which is the combined rate of unemployment and inflation, is the lowest it has been in 27 years. We have all-time high exports, which is one of the reasons that corn and soybeans

and wheat are at high prices now, and the farmers are enjoying that. We have—listen to this—in the last 3 years alone, in each successive year there have been record numbers of new small businesses started and record numbers of new self-made millionaires, not people who inherited it, people who worked for it and made it.

Now, that's one side of America's economy, and it is exhilarating. And it is the side of America's economy that most of you who are students here at Drake will move into. But there is another side to America's economy: About half our people still haven't gotten a raise in terms of the real purchasing power of their incomes in 10 or 15 years, a lot of our people who have worked hard all their lives, worked for these big companies that are doing all this downsizing.

Hardly a week goes by that I don't hear from somebody I've known, who is my age, nearly 50—I hate to say it—[laughter]—it's hard for me to look at you and think I'll be eligible for the AARP in 6 months—[laughter]—but there it is. But anyway, I get letters from people my age, people I've known. And they've been downsized, and they've got kids the age of the students that are here. And they say, "Well, this is great. My corporation stock went up. They laid me off. How am I going to educate my kids?" So you ask yourself, well, if all these incredible good things are happening, how did that happen?

Or let's look at the march of the world toward peace after the cold war. There are no nuclear missiles pointed at the people of the United States for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age. Your country is continuing to fight to reduce the threat of weapons of mass destruction. We have thwarted terrorist attacks on our soil. We have worked for peace from Haiti to Northern Ireland to South Africa to the Middle East to Bosnia. This is all a good thing. The world is plainly more secure than it was 3 years ago.

But it only takes a few people to decide that they don't want to bear the burdens of the daily work of peace to do an act of cowardice and madness, like those people that blew up that building in London yesterday or the cowards that killed the Prime Minister of Israel, because he stood for peace, or the people that walked into the subway in Japan

and broke open that little vial of poison gas and killed all those folks, or the people who are still terrorizing the citizens of their communities in Latin America because they insist on running drug cartels because there's just too much money in it and they don't care who they kill in the process.

So this is a safer world, all right, but there are still a lot of things out there that we have to face. Or look at the most important thing of all: How are we doing in being true to our basic values as a people? There's a lot of evidence that we are getting our act together, and it's good. In the last 3 years in the United States the crime rate is down; the welfare rolls are down; the poverty rolls are down; the teen pregnancy rate has dropped. That is good news and America should be proud.

On the other hand, we all know they're still too high, don't we? When can we be satisfied about crime? I'll tell you when: when crime is the exception, not the rule again; when you flip on the evening news and you're surprised to see the lead story be a murder or a rape or arson or something else that a civilized people shouldn't have to look at every night on the news.

So, my fellow Americans, I tell you again, this is the age of possibility. More people will be able to have more opportunities to live out their dreams and to fulfill their God-given capacities than at any point in our history if we find a way to solve the challenges we have and to do it together.

Sometimes people come up to me and say—I mean just almost as if they're my neighbors—they say, "What's the most important thing you've learned in the last 3 years?" and I've learned a lot, so it's a pretty long list. [*Laughter*] But if you ask me what the most important thing is, it is that the debate this country should be having is not whether we're going to have big Government solve all the problems—no one believes that anymore—but it is certainly not whether we can just leave everyone to fend for themselves. It is whether we are finally going to get serious about working together on a daily basis the way we do when the town floods out, the way we do when the chips are down, the way we did when Oklahoma City—tragedies happen. If we are going to do this to-

gether, or not—that is the most important lesson I have learned.

There is no more big Government. Our Government has been shrunk now—the National Government's the smallest it's been in 30 years. We did that. It's the smallest it's been in 30 years. But I saw those young people today, and their parents and their employers right before I came in here—and your work-study program here at Drake, that's the kind of country we ought to have, where we say nationwide, we want more young people to go to school; we think you ought to be able to go to school even if your family's hit on hard times and you don't have all the money. We think it's a good investment to pay people who are willing to work their way through school. We think that's a good thing. We're not going to tell you how to do it, who to hire, what to do, but we think it's a national responsibility to help people get this done. It is a good thing.

So let me ask you very briefly to consider where we are as a country in light of what I said. First, don't be discouraged. We are going through a period of change as profound as anything that's happened in 100 years. One hundred years ago, we moved as a country mostly from rural areas to where we mostly lived in cities and small towns. We moved from a time where most of us worked on the farm to a time when those who stayed on the farm were productive enough to feed ourselves and the world, and most of us worked in the factory. It happened 100 years ago.

Now what's happening is we are moving from a time when our economy is dominated not by industry, but by information and technology, and where we live in a global village of worldwide markets. The changes in work are staggering. There's more mind and less muscle. The changes in the workplace are staggering. There are more computers and fewer bureaucrats and people moving up and down the line and more workplaces are smaller and more flexible. The changes in communications are breathtaking, and the changes in the markets are amazing. The money markets and the markets for goods and services are global.

Of course, there are going to be changes in our lives. And of course, there must be

changes in what our Government does. Whenever you have a big uprooting like this, you can look at all of human history and you will see when things change this much, a lot of people do very well, but a lot of people are disoriented and suffer and are challenged.

So our challenge is to figure out a way for everybody to benefit, for all people to participate who are willing to work for it and to grow this country together instead of letting it continue to be divided. We should not use elections to divide; we should use elections to unite this country and move it forward.

Now I ask you all to see every issue debated this year in that context. When you hear a discussion about the national budget, you should say: We want you to balance the budget. This country has got no business running a deficit every year, even when times are good. We never should have gotten into that pattern of the 12 years before I became President when we were exploding the deficit. We shouldn't have done it. We have cut the deficit in half in 3 years, and we need to finish the job. But you should ask yourself when you hear a proposal: Will this help all people who are willing to work for it achieve the American dream? Will this bring us together instead of dividing us? Is this consistent with our values of work and family and community? Will this help us be a leading force for peace and freedom?

The budget that I favor enables us to balance the budget by the congressional score-keeping and still protects our obligations to our parents through Medicare and Medicaid, our obligations to our children through education and protection of the environment and investment in their health care. That's the kind of balanced budget we ought to have. It is consistent with our values.

Let me say this: As we go from now to November, I hope we will see that deficit as yesterday's legacy, and ask ourselves, what are the great challenges facing all these young people in this audience, in this country today or in the future? I believe they are seven, and let me reiterate them for you.

One, we have got to do more to strengthen family life and give all of our children their childhoods back. That's why I want to do something about crime. That's why I want

more Head Start for children. That's why I want our children immunized. That's why, in the telecommunications bill, I fought to give parents the V-chip, because we had another study last week which showed that years and years of hours a day of sustained, mindless violence have a deadening, numbing, destructive impact on young people, and parents ought to be able to limit it.

We have got to do more. We have got to do more to raise the level and the reach of education in America. Every one of our public schools should be able to have the low dropout rates and high achievement rates that you generally find in Iowa. There is no reason that should not be in every State in the country, in every school in the country.

By the year 2000, every classroom, every library in this country, and every schoolhouse in this country, no matter how poor, no matter how rural, no matter how inner-city, should be connected to the Internet, so that every child, no matter how poor, should be able to reach the world with learning.

And we know that every young American should be able to go on to college. I am proud of the fact that this administration has improved the student loan options for students, has passed the national service program and put 25,000 young people out there serving their communities and earning money for college, has increased the Pell grant program. But it is not enough. I have proposed that we now give a \$1,000 National Merit Scholarship to everyone who graduates in the top 5 percent of any high school in the United States of America every year. And I believe that we need to increase the work-study program by 50 percent, so that we can have one million students every year working their way through college, contributing to the workplace, growing America, and improving their chances for the future.

And finally, let me say, on the question of education, if we are going to have a tax cut, the best way to spend the money is to give families a deduction from their taxes of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of college tuition. We couldn't make a better investment.

Our third great challenge is to bring economic security to working families who never get a raise, lose their jobs, don't have health

care, and are worried about their pensions. Because every family that's out there working and raising children deserves to have a measure of security. It used to be security came because you could guarantee someone a job for a lifetime at the same company. If you see all this downsizing now, how will we define security in the future? Here's how I think we have to define it. Every working family should:

No. 1, have access to immediate education and training whenever they lose a job. People ought to be able to look to the Federal Government for a "GI bill" for America's workers. If a person loses a job, they ought to get a voucher in the mail worth \$2,600 a year to take to the nearest community college or other appropriate training institution to begin right away preparing for a new line of work.

No. 2, all of you know that the First Lady and I, and our administration, tried hard to solve the health care problem so that every American family could have health insurance. Now we have apparently made a decision, with the help of hundreds of millions of dollars in lobbyist advertising, that we will remain the only country in the world with an advanced economy that cannot figure out how to give health insurance to everybody under 65. If you're over 65, we did it. Well, at least we ought to be able to guarantee that the people who don't have it have access to affordable health insurance that they can buy. At least we ought to be able to do that.

There is—it's not too late to ask everybody who wants to be President about this issue. There is before the United States Senate today a bill sponsored by 45 Republican and Democratic Senators, endorsed by not only the labor organizations and the consumer organizations, but the national chamber of commerce and the association of manufacturers, which would say, simply, you cannot lose your health insurance when you change jobs or when you or someone in your family gets sick. That's what health insurance is for.

That bill would help millions of families to have a little peace of mind as they struggle with life's challenges. That bill is on the floor of the Senate, but the insurance companies do not want it brought up to a vote. I want the people of Iowa to write their Members

of Congress and say, "Bring it up to a vote and pass it, and send it to the President of the United States so I can have some more peace of mind." It is the right thing to do.

Finally, our working families need the security of knowing they can get and keep a pension. Whether you're a small-business person, a farmer, or somebody working in a big outfit, you ought to be able to get a pension and know it's going to be secure. I do not intend to let our pension funds be raided again as they once were. I don't want our pensions endangered, and I want to make it easier for small-business people and farmers to take out pensions for themselves and their employees. That's a very important part of family security as well.

And while I'm at it, let me make one last point about family security. I learned that these young people working on work-study here are making between \$4.65 and \$7.00 an hour. Most of them make between \$4.65 and \$5.00 an hour. But do you know—and that's not a lot of money, but it will buy a pizza and take you to the movie every now and then, pay some of your costs and relieve the burdens on your families. But the minimum wage in America is still \$4.25 an hour. If it is not raised this year, it will be at a 40-year low in terms of purchasing power. You cannot raise a family on \$4.25 an hour, but millions of Americans are trying to do it. We have consigned—you think about that, I want you to think about that—I want the young people out in this audience who are on work-study making \$4.65 an hour, knowing how you have to watch every penny if you just want to order a pizza once a week, to imagine what you would do if you were working for \$4.25 an hour, trying to support children of your own. It cannot be done. There's a lot of talk in this country about family values every election time. Well, my family value says, we ought not to ask people to raise children on \$4.25. We ought to raise the minimum wage.

Stronger families, better education, economic security. Fourth, we have to continue to fight for safe streets, to lower the crime rate. It is abysmal that young people today feel the fear they do from crime and violence. We are making progress. We are going to put 100,000 police on the street because we

know with community policing you can prevent crime and drive the crime rate down.

We were right to pass the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban. It has made this a safer country. I just want to point out—I imagine that Iowa is not all that different from Arkansas, where half the people have a hunting or fishing license, or both. I just got back from New Hampshire, where they had a big deer season, and I can tell you we had plenty of ducks in Arkansas, and they shot them with the same weapons they used before we passed the assault weapons ban. All those people who said those hunters were going to lose their guns didn't tell them the truth. They weren't right; they were wrong. But I'll tell you who did lose their guns: 41,000 felons could not buy handguns because of the Brady bill. It was the right thing to do.

And what we ought to do, we must have a renewed effort to finish the work of putting the police on the street and to move against gangs and drugs and guns. And we must continue to fight it abroad as well as at home.

The fifth thing we have to do is to leave the environment safer and cleaner for today and tomorrow. Until the last year or so, the work of cleaning the environment was by and large a bipartisan one. Until the last year or so it would have been unthinkable for a majority in either party to say, "Let's cut the enforcement at the Environmental Protection Agency by 25 percent. Let's delay all regulations. Let's tie all new efforts to clean air and clean water up in knots in court for years and years and years. Let's walk away from our commitment to safe food and safe drinking water and the kinds of things that make this country a safe and good place to live. Let's delay regulations designed to address problems like the *E. coli* problem where people ate contaminated meat, and some died, or the cryptosporidium problem that got into the water system in Milwaukee and 100 died.

We cannot afford to have a partisan division on this. We cannot afford to say we can't grow our economy unless we pollute our environment. We have to do everything we can to grow our economy by preserving our environment. That's why I supported ethanol and electric cars and natural gas cars. That's why

I have supported these things, and I want you to support them, as well. This can never be a partisan political issue again.

The people of Iowa and the United States can put this away for decades as a partisan political issue if you will just stand up and say: I want my environment preserved. I want my children to grow up in a healthy country, and I know the planet cannot be preserved unless we can grow the economy in a way that is good for the environment, not destructive of it. You can do that. You can give that to the future, and you ought to do it.

Finally, let me just briefly say there are two other things that we have to face. One is we have to continue to be the leader of the world for peace and freedom and security. It is so easy to say we should walk away from these challenges now with the cold war over. But we can't. We have a chance this year to get a comprehensive nuclear test ban through, no more nuclear testing. We have a chance to do that. We ought to do that, but we have to lead to do it.

Everything we want other people to do for us in the rest of the world requires us to be willing to lead because we are strong and great and we are trusted. We want the Europeans to be fair and buy our agricultural products. We want Latin America to grow with us in trade. How can we walk away from them if they're willing to risk their lives to work with us to do what we did in the last year and a half, to arrest seven of the eight leaders of the Cali drug cartel? We can't; we've got to work with them.

So it isn't particularly popular. Every time I talk about foreign policy in a large group I get the feeling people are going to yawn or say, "Well, you're doing all right. I trust you, but don't make me think about it." This is a very small world. We've got corn over \$3 today because of foreign policy. Wheat is over \$5. You've got \$7 soybeans because we've got a growing world market. But you can't just have economics without a commitment to freedom and decency. And we have to be a part of all of that, and we must understand how it fits together.

The last thing that I want to say to you is that we have got to have a political system capable of generating support and trust from

the American people. The Congress has to pass the line-item veto they've been promising. The Congress has to pass campaign finance reform, like they've been promising.

But let me say this, this is a two-way street. That's why I like the caucuses; you actually have to make some effort to have your voice heard. You need to say, "I'm going to stop this uncritical bashing of Government and instead ask myself what do we have to do together to move this country forward."

When the streets were flooded here, you did not want a weak FEMA or a weak SBA. When we can collect, as we did last year, a record amount of child support payments to give back to families that have been abandoned, you don't want us to be weak; you want us to be strong. You want us to be strong. You don't want a weak student financial program, you want a strong student financial program. We can cut the default rate, but we ought to loan more money to people.

My friend, James Carville, has a line in his new book, that I just commend to you. He said, everybody likes to bash the Government. But, he said, in the 30 years, our Government has spent half of our tax money on just three things: national defense, Social Security, and Medicare. That's half your money. What happened? We won the cold war, cut the poverty rate among senior citizens in half, and Medicare means today, if you get to be 65 in America, we have the longest life expectancy for senior citizens of any country on the face of the Earth. We can do things together, folks, when we do it right, and we ought to say that.

Let me say especially to every young person in this audience, this country has got a lot of problems, and every politician in it makes mistakes, and Government sometimes does dumb things. But this is a very great country. And in this period of change, remember something President Kennedy said to my generation when the Berlin Wall was up and the Communist world was divided from the free world. He said, "Our democracy is far from perfect, but we never had to put up a wall to keep our people in." You remember that.

And remember, most of the problems we have in this country are broadly shared by other nations who are where we are in our

development. And of all those wealthy nations, we have created the largest number of jobs; we have the highest rate of growth; nobody has a lower tax rate; nobody has a lower deficit as a percentage of their economy. We have problems, but we are moving on them.

Cynicism is a cheap excuse for inaction, for walking away from the responsibilities of citizenship—citizenship.

So I say to you, I will do everything I can as long as I am your President to meet those seven challenges for the future. I will do everything I can to complete my mission to see that every American who will work for it can achieve the American dream, to see that we remain the strongest force for peace and freedom, to see that we keep coming together instead of being torn apart. But in the end, what happens to this country still depends on what it has depended on for almost 220 years: you, the people; we, the people. You be there. You lift up your sights. You fight for your future. And we will see the best is yet to come.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. in the Knapp Center at Drake University. In his remarks, he referred to Michael R. Ferrari, president, Drake University, and Mayor A. Arthur Davis of Des Moines.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Tobacco Use Prevention and an Exchange With Reporters

February 12, 1996

[Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala introduced the President and thanked him for his leadership on the issue of tobacco and children.]

The President. I'm looking forward to it. First of all, let me welcome all of you here to the White House and to the Oval Office.

As I'm sure you know, this is an issue that has concerned me for some time, and there are real reasons for it. Three thousand young people start smoking every day, even though it's illegal for them to do so. A thousand will have their lives shortened because of it. Smoking tobacco is the largest single cause of preventable death in the United States