

are still 10 million American children living within 4 miles of a toxic waste dump—10 million of them. But if you'll give us 4 more years, we'll clean up the 500 worst dumps, and our kids will be growing up next to parks, not poison. Will you help us build that bridge to the 21st century? [*Applause*] Will you do that? [*Applause*]

Let me make one last comment. A big part of building our bridge is how we relate to the rest of the world and how we relate to each other. I'm proud of the fact that this country is a safer country than it was. The nuclear threat has been diminished. We have been a force for peace. We have strengthened our efforts against terrorism. We have dramatically expanded trade. But we have to face the fact that we are going to live in a global society where no matter where you live, we can transfer ideas, information, money, technology, across the borders of nations in a split second.

Now, if you think about that kind of world, there is no nation as well-positioned as the United States to do well. Why? Well, look around this crowd today—because we all come from somewhere else. Everybody but the Native Americans all come from somewhere else—everybody. When I welcomed the Olympic teams to Atlanta there were teams from 197 different national groups. The largest county in America, Los Angeles County, has people from 150 of those places in one of our counties. When I looked at the American Olympic team it occurred to me that if they took their uniforms off we wouldn't know where they're from. [*Laughter*] They could be from China; they could be from Japan; they could be from India; they could be from Pakistan; they could be from the Middle East; they could be from the Nordic countries; they could be from Europe; they could be from Latin America; they could be from anywhere. That's America.

This is not a country based on race, ethnicity, or specific religious convictions. This is a country which has said for over 200 years, if you believe in the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution of this country, you're our kind of person. All you've got to do is show up tomorrow and behave and we'll build a bridge you

can walk across into the 21st century. Now, you have to ask yourself, do you believe that?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Will you help us build that kind of bridge?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Do you believe our best days are still ahead?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Then for 39 days go out and tell it to other people, and we'll have a great victory in Texas and in America.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:42 p.m. at Sam Houston Park. In his remarks, he referred to Victoria Baldwin, principal, Fulmore Elementary School in Austin, TX. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

September 28, 1996

Good morning. Today I want to talk to you about a new executive action I'm taking to crack down on deadbeat parents who won't pay the child support they owe.

During my time as President, I've had a straightforward strategy: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and coming together in a stronger American community. That's America's basic bargain.

We've worked hard to offer every American opportunity, the chance to make the most of his or her own life. We've got 10½ million new jobs, the lowest unemployment in 7½ years, the deficit has been cut by 60 percent. And just this week, we received more news that our strategy is working and America is on the right track. According to the U.S. census, the income of a typical family went up \$1,600 over inflation over the past 2 years. In just the last year the increase was almost \$900, the biggest increase in a decade. The number of people living in poverty and the rate of income inequality in our country dropped faster than at any time since 1968. Our economy clearly is on the right track to the 21st century.

As we offer opportunity, we must also demand responsibility. The problems of our society will only be solved if there is an upsurge of personal responsibility, if individuals take

it upon themselves to meet their obligations, do the right thing, and give something back to those around them.

No area cries out for greater personal responsibility than the quiet crisis of child support. No one should be able to escape responsibility for bringing a child into the world. That is our first and most fundamental duty. But today too many fathers have tried to walk away from that obligation. When a father leaves the home it can throw a mother and children into poverty. In fact, one of the main reasons people go on welfare is because the father has failed to meet his obligations of child support. If all the parents in this country paid the child support they owe, we could move 800,000 women and children off the welfare rolls tomorrow.

So our administration has waged an unprecedented and sustained campaign to collect child support and make deadbeat parents pay up. We required States to set up programs at hospitals to find out the identity of fathers at the time a baby is born. Two hundred thousand fathers have been identified through this program. We're requiring mothers who receive welfare to tell us the name of the father of the child. We set up a national data base of delinquent parents and linked up the data bases from 17 States. And I'm pleased to report that in its first few months this system has identified over 60,000 delinquent fathers. Over half owed money to mothers on welfare.

And the landmark welfare reform legislation I signed last month institutes the most dramatic crackdown yet on child support enforcement. It says to deadbeat parents: Pay up or we'll track you down, garnish your wages, and make you pay what you owe. Under the new welfare law, States will suspend driver's licenses of deadbeats who don't pay and the National Government will take away passports. This year, at my direction, the IRS will collect \$1 billion in child support by withholding part of tax refunds.

The U.S. Postal Service has begun work with the States to post lists of parents who owe support. And we're using the new information technologies to catch delinquent parents, linking the web pages of 20 States to post the identities of deadbeat parents on the Internet.

We now have new evidence of how effective this crackdown has been. In 4 years, child support collections in our country have risen from \$8 billion to \$11.8 billion—a nearly 50 percent increase in child support collections. And nearly 800,000 paternities were identified. That's an increase of 50 percent over 1992.

We've made a real difference. But we can do more, and we must do more. This past week, the Justice Department proposed legislation making it a felony and increasing penalties for crossing State lines to avoid paying child support or to refuse to pay support for a child in another State.

Last year I issued an Executive order requiring all employees of the Federal Government to pay the child support they owed. Today I'm issuing a new Executive order designed to crack down even harder on those who refuse to pay their child support.

First, I'm ordering Federal agencies to take necessary and legal steps to deny Government loans, such as small business loans, farm loans, home loans, to deadbeat parents.

Second, the Government will do more to collect child support itself. We'll create a streamlined computer system that can find out which people who receive Federal payments still owe child support. We'll deduct child support debts from these fees paid to Government consultants and vendors and the benefits paid to retired Federal employees. The Treasury Department estimates that some \$800 million in payments go to these deadbeat parents. These funds can then be paid to the mother and the children.

The Executive order says simply if you owe child support, you shouldn't get the support of the National Government. You can't make money off the taxpayers if you're refusing to support your own children. It says we mean business, and we intend to make responsibility a way of life.

We know that when we do take responsibility we can meet the difficult challenges like crime, welfare, and poverty. We're already making real and dramatic progress on child support collections. And I am confident that we can make even more progress. But ultimately, we will only meet this challenge if we recognize that governments don't raise children, parents do. We need everyone to

take responsibility to give our children the love and support they need and deserve, to show them by our own actions the meaning of right and wrong. If we do this, then I have great confidence in our country, our children, and our future.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7 p.m. on September 27 at a private residence in Houston, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 28.

**Remarks in Providence,
Rhode Island**
September 28, 1996

Good morning, Rhode Island! Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you for being here in such large numbers and with such great good spirits. You deserve these good spirits because our country is on the right track to the 21st century.

Mayor Cianci, thank you for that wonderful welcome and for your exuberant leadership. Under that leadership, as I saw when I drove into town today, Providence has become once again not only a truly historic city but a wonderfully beautiful one. It's an honor for me to be here in this great place.

Thank you, Secretary of State James Longevin, for being here, for being on this platform with me and for serving well and for embodying the proposition that every person in this country ought to have a chance to live up to his or her God-given capacities. Thank you for serving.

I want to thank the legislative leaders, Governor Sundlun, the other distinguished citizens of Rhode Island who are here. I want to say a special word of thanks to the people who provided our music, the Cranston High School West Marching Band, the Easterly High School—Westerly High School Jazz Band, and the Holy Cross Cathedral Church Gospel Choir. Thank you.

Thank you very, very much, Dawn Fayerwether. Thank you for standing up here as a living symbol of what our common efforts are all about: to build a bridge to the 21st century we can all walk across.

Thank you, Lieutenant Governor Bob Weygand, for running for Congress. We'll

sure need you there as you saw over the last 2 years. And thank you, Patrick Kennedy, for serving with such energy and determination. You know, I thought I had energy until I met Patrick Kennedy. [Laughter] I don't know if he ever sleeps, but he certainly never stops working for the people of Rhode Island. And I thank him for what he has done.

Thank you, Senator Claiborne Pell and Mrs. Pell, for a lifetime of service to this State and to our Nation. Thank you not only for your dedication to education but also for your work for the cause of world peace and for all you have done to advance it. And finally, Senator, after so many years in which our national politics have become too mean, too personal, too divisive, and too full of hot air, it was a real honor for me to stand up here and watch you once again in positive, graceful, constructive tones set out what is best about our country, best about our Constitution, and best about public service. We wish you well, we love you, and we thank you.

And thank you, Jack Reed, also for a lifetime of service, beginning with your career at West Point, culminating now in your soon-to-be ascendance to the United States Senate, for representing the American dream. It's alive and well, and unlike some, you want it to be alive and well for everyone else as well. And we thank you for that. Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am especially glad to be here in Rhode Island today and with Senator Pell to bring you some exciting news that occurred late last night. Last night we reached a broad bipartisan agreement on the budget for the Government next year. It is good for America because it continues to move us toward a balanced budget while protecting, not violating, our values.

It is especially exciting for me because the budget adopts my program to continue our advances in education. And it is a fitting tribute to Senator Claiborne Pell's last session of Congress because—and I don't think he knows this yet—the budget we agreed to last night contains the biggest increase in Pell grant scholarships in 20 years.

The budget will put 40,000 more young children in Head Start. The budget fully funds our commitment to the technological literacy initiative which will connect every classroom in every school in America to the