

So for me, I think we ought to—since I think what happens to our kids is more important than whether the house next door burns down, I think we ought to have the same attitude. We ought to say, “Okay, I’m showing up for work. Tell me what I can do.” And I believe that we have to do more to help parents do their job, whether it’s better child care or family leave programs or, literally, people helping people understand that your kids can become strangers in your own home.

And I agree with what has already been said. It is a fact that most parents in America spend far less time with their children today than they used to spend. That is not free. That’s why I say, we will never be the society we want in the new century until we better balance work and family.

I think we have to help the schools do more. I was in a fabulous school in Alexandria, Virginia, the other day—that’s the most culturally diverse school district in America now, just across the river from the White House—where they have peer mediation programs and counseling services and mental health services, and a 1-800 anonymous hotline that if one kid calls and says, “I’m worried” about another one, they know it will be followed up on, and they know they will be kept anonymous. We have to do those kinds of things. We have to give every school the ability to protect our children better.

I think the people in the gun business ought to come to the table and help us. And I want to say one thing that wasn’t mentioned, that I’m very proud of, is that the gun manufacturers, who for years sided always with the NRA and always opposed all these measures, have changed. And every one of you who believes that it’s a good thing that we raise the handgun ownership age to 21 and that we close the loophole—and Senator Feinstein’s assault weapons bill, so now we can stop these big ammunition clips from coming in—it’s never had any purpose, anyway.

We can also thank the gun manufacturers who supported the legislation this time in Congress and had the kind of civic responsibility that we need more from every American. I appreciate that.

Now, we’ve still got a lot of work to do. We’ve got to do background checks on explosives. We’ve got to get this gun show loophole closed in the right way. And I’m going to watch it pretty close, because unlike most Americans, I’ve actually been to a lot of these gun shows. It was part of my job description at one time when I was Governor of Arkansas. And I enjoyed them greatly, but they ought to have background checks, and they ought not to have loopholes.

So that’s a big part of it. I also believe—let’s talk about the entertainment issue. You know, I think the—here’s the way I look at this. It’s like the NRA can say, “Guns don’t kill people, people do.” That’s true, but people with guns kill more people than people without them. And we’re the only country in the world that has no reasonable restrictions. There are now over 300 studies that show that sustained lifetime, week-in and week-out, night-in and night-out, exposure to indiscriminate violence through various media outlets over a period of time makes people less sensitive, both to violence and to the consequences of violence.

Now, for most kids, it won’t make any difference. But if you have a society where we have already positive—there are more kids who are spending less time with their folks and less time being connected to somebody that they know they’re the most important person in the world to, and if that same society has those same kids having easier access to weapons, then desensitizing them will be more likely to push those that are vulnerable into destructive behavior.

Now, that doesn’t make anybody who makes any movie or any video game or any television program a bad person or personally responsible with one show for a disastrous outcome. There’s no call for finger-pointing here, but we just look around and we know that all these things go together, starting with the raw material that you’ve got more kids who are more isolated, some of them in their own homes, strangers.

So I would like to say, first, like I said about the gun manufacturers, it ought to be put in the record that the entertainment industry for 6 years has worked with Al Gore and me and with our administration on the V-chip, the television rating system, the video

game rating system, the screening technologies that the video people—the Internet people have worked with us to try to help parents screen inappropriate material away from their kids on the Internet.

Today, in my radio address, I said there were two or three other things—I had been studying this and listening—that I think ought to be done. I think that if young people can't see certain kinds of movies, then they shouldn't see the advertisement for the movies if the advertisement has the same stuff that caused the movie to be rated as inappropriate. And that's something I think the entertainment industry can look at and ought to look at very seriously, that the advertising ought to be consistent with the rating in terms of the audience that receives it.

I also think there's a lot of evidence that these ratings are regularly ignored, not by you but by the people who actually sell or rent the video tapes or the video games or run the movie theaters. And the rating system ought to be used by checking ID's. And finally, I believe in light of the most recent research, it would be a very good thing if the industry would reexamine the nature of the rating system, especially the PG-13 as it relates to violence, not because anybody is willfully doing something that they know is going to hurt somebody, not because any one television program or video game or movie will do it, but because we know that by the time a person becomes 18 in America, he or she has seen about 40,000 killings, and because we have a higher percentage of vulnerable people.

But we are determined to do this as a family. When we were at the White House, we sat around a big old table and everybody was there, and everybody was asking, "What can I do?" And I say again to the Congress, this is not the time to let any interest group control doing things that are common sense. How in the world we can let somebody buy a gun at a gun show that they can't get in a gun shop because they've got a criminal background is beyond me. And this is a classic example—to go back to what my leaders said earlier—the people of Florida, not the most liberal State in America, voted last November, 72 percent to close the gun show

loophole with no ifs, ands, or buts, no wrinkles or curlicues or subterfuge.

So I say this is a time for all of us to do this. And how we deal with this, and whether we really come up with a kind of grassroots national campaign, like the campaign that Mothers and Students Against Drunk Driving launched that precipitously lowered deaths from drunk driving in America, like the effort that has been made that has precipitously lowered the teen pregnancy rate, like the grassroots effort business made that led to 10,000 business people hiring over 400,000 people off welfare—how we do this will have a lot to say about whether we're really going to build one community.

But there are other things we ought to do, too. And let me come back to Kosovo and talk about—you say, "Well, what's that got to do with this?" Well, first of all, all the studies, the reports indicate that these young men who were involved in this terrible tragedy at Littleton felt like they were a disrespected group and felt like they had to find some other groups to look down on or hate, the athletes, the minorities in the school.

And in Kosovo what you see and what you saw in Bosnia is people who have been ethnically cleansed. That's a sort of sterilized word for being systematically killed, uprooted, raped, having your property records destroyed, having your mosques and your museums and your libraries destroyed, having an effort to basically eradicate your existence.

But it's very interesting. Don't you find it ironic—especially those of you—I was talking to Steven the other day about my library, and we were talking about whether we could have some virtual reality effects in my library in the museum, you know. Sometimes I feel like I'm living in virtual reality, so I'm highly interested in this. *[Laughter]* This is the kind of thing you guys think about when you think about the 21st century, you know? Our kids are all on the Internet, and the human genome secrets have all been unlocked, and we all live to be 135, and we whiz around the world in safe airplanes that never have wrecks. And we'll be driving on the Los Angeles freeways, and there won't be any more

traffic jams because all our cars will be computer programmed and directed and everything will be managed just fine. This is the exciting—and our kids will all have pen pals in Mongolia and Zimbabwe and Bolivia and every place around the world. Technology will bring us together, and there will be a new golden age. That's our sort of image for our children in the 21st century.

Don't you think it is ironic that here we are in the last year of this millennium and that image is threatened by the oldest demon of human society, the hatred of the other? It starts as fear of the other, goes to hatred of the other, goes to dehumanization of the other, goes to killing of the other. Don't you think that's interesting? I mean, these people in Kosovo, they're not fighting over who gets the right to show the latest Hollywood movie in the theaters in Pristina. In Rwanda, they weren't killing each other over who got the latest software package. They're talking about how they worship God and what their ethnic group is, what real or imagined slights they have against one another as groups. And we are not free of it here.

I was in Texas the other day meeting with the daughter of James Byrd, the African-American who was dragged to death in Texas. The other night, I went to the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights dinner in Washington and recognized the mother of Matthew Shepard, the young man who was killed in Wyoming because he was gay. So America's got some work to do here, too. We ought to pass the hate crimes act and the employment nondiscrimination act, and we ought to—to show that we understand this.

But let me say, how we respond to Kosovo will determine what kind of world we're going to live in. I think all of you who know me know that I have worked for peace, that I deplore violence, that I have been heartbroken by the people who have been innocents in this battle who have perished.

You know, I'd a lot rather be in Northern Ireland giving speeches to my people about how they ought to put all their guns down. I want to go back and work on peace in the Middle East. I don't even think that we can intervene in all the ethnic conflicts in the world. We're not asking everybody to get along. We can't even ask them not to fight.

But if we cannot stand, after the lessons of the 20th century, against the systematic killing of people and their uprooting because of their religion or their race or their ethnicity, then what kind of world are we leaving to our children?

You know, I had a wonderful day today. I spent the day with my daughter today, and Hillary just got back from Macedonia. That's where she was in the refugee camps. And so we called her and then we got lonesome, and we'd call her again. The three of us were talking about all this. And she was talking to me about these people and how they have lost everything and how they have loved ones they don't even know what happened to. There are tens of thousands of people who are unaccounted for. Nobody knows what happened to them. And she talked about this little girl that was holding her hand while she was speaking. The little girl had no idea what she was saying, just holding her hand.

I saw them in Germany when I was there, the young women and the Muslim families—where rape is an even worse thing than it is in our culture—saying, "I want to talk to you, but these are things I cannot discuss in my family." A 15-year-old boy stood up and said, "I cannot talk about Kosovo," and sat down and started crying.

I ask you to think about this. What Europe and the United States is doing, what we are now engaging the Russians in trying to do—we're not trying to redraw the map of Europe. We're not playing some power game. I don't want to control anybody's life. All I want to do is to create a world in which we do not idly turn away from systematic bigotry based on hatred of the other that leads to mass killing. And I believe, as difficult as all the questions are I have to answer here—God, I grieve for those Chinese people that were killed in that horrible mistake that was made. As difficult as all the questions I have to answer, I would rather answer these questions than answer the question of why am I having a good time in Los Angeles tonight, and we have not lifted a finger to help those people. That is the question I would have no answer to. I would have no answer to that.

They are a part of our community. If you want a world that will really be fit for your children to live in, if you want the benefits

of the modern world, we need at home the philosophy the Democratic Party has brought that we're going to have all these benefits; we're not going to leave anybody behind if we can help it. We're certainly not going to leave anybody behind that's willing to work to be a part of it.

But even more, we have to build a sense of community, where we not only tolerate each other, we actually relish our differences. And we can have the security to relish them and make our lives more interesting, because underneath we know that what binds us together is a whole lot more important than what's different about us.

And I want to close with this story. Tom Daschle told you that we had these tribal leaders come to the White House. And he didn't tell you the whole story.

We had the heads of 19 Indian tribes from the high northern plains, from the two Dakotas and Montana. They asked for a meeting at the White House through Senator Daschle and his colleagues. And then they came into the Roosevelt Room at the White House, which is in honor of Teddy, Franklin, and Eleanor Roosevelt, and Teddy Roosevelt's Nobel Peace Prize is hanging on the mantelpiece.

And so the tribal leaders said, "Well, could we sit in a circle? That is our custom." So we sat in a circle. And each in their turn, they stood up and said, "Well, here's what we'd like to have help on. Here's our education concerns, our health care concerns, our economic concerns." And I came into the middle of the meeting, listened to it all. It was just fascinating.

Then at the end, the guy who was sort of their main spokesman, the tribal leader, whose name was Tex Hall, interestingly enough, stood up and said, "Well, there's one other thing we want to do." He said, "Mr. President, we want to talk to you about Kosovo." He said, "You see, we know something about ethnic cleansing. And our country has come a long way. And we believe what you are doing is right. And so the chiefs have signed this proclamation supporting it."

And then at the end of the room, another young man who was a tribal leader stood up, and he said, "I would like to speak." He had this beautiful silver necklace on. And he was

very dignified, and he said, "Mr. President," he said, "I had two uncles. One landed on the beach at Normandy. One was the first Native American fighter pilot in the United States military." He said, "My great-great-grandfather was slaughtered by the 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee." He said, "We have come a long way from my great-great-grandfather's time, to my uncles' time, to this time." He said, "I have only one son, and I love him more than life. But I would be honored if he went to Kosovo to stand up for the human rights of people who are different from the majority."

That is the journey America has made. That is the journey I hope we can help the world to make. And if we do, you will take care of the rest of our challenges.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 p.m. in the Courtyard at the Greystone Mansion. In his remarks, he referred to event cohosts David Geffen, Steven Spielberg, and Jeffrey Katzenberg, founders, DreamWorks SKG studios; Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli; Gov. Gray Davis of California and his wife, Sharon; Sen. Robert G. Torricelli, chair, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy, chair, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; Mayor Sandra J. Levin of Culver City, CA; actress Goldie Hawn; Renee Mullins, daughter of murder victim James Byrd, Jr.; Judy Shepard, mother of murder victim Matthew Shepard; Tex Hall, chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation (the Three Affiliated Tribes); and Gregg Bourland, chairman, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

### **Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in San Diego, California**

*May 16, 1999*

Thank you very much. I was hoping that no one in California had heard that joke I told. *[Laughter]* They liked it in Albany, however. *[Laughter]*

Let me say to Irwin and Joan, first of all, I want to thank you for opening this wonderful home and for giving me a tour of the art and a tour of your family. *[Laughter]* What a wonderful, big, beautiful group they are. And I thank you for your philanthropy and for your commitment to so many good

causes, and for bringing all of us together today. A lot of my old friends are here and some people that I've never had the honor to meet before. I appreciate that.

I'd also like to say how glad I am to be here with Bob and Jane Filner. You know, I deal with a lot of Members of Congress—on occasion, even Members of the other party deal with me. I can honestly say that I have never met and dealt with any Member of the House of Representatives who was more consistent and persistent in trying to get me and the White House to respond to the needs of his district than Bob Filner. There isn't anybody else who works any harder at that, and you can be very proud of that. He's done a very fine job.

I want to thank Assemblywoman Susan Davis for being willing to run for Congress; it's an arduous endeavor. It takes a lot of time, a lot of money, and a lot of heart.

When I was 27 years old in 1974, I ran for Congress, and I lost. I wonder if I'd be here today if I won. *[Laughter]* But I remember, I ran against a man who had 99 percent name recognition and 85 percent approval. And I ran for 11 months, and 6 weeks before the election, I was still behind 59 to 23, and I lost—I got 48½ percent of the vote. I say that just to encourage you. Every election has a certain ribbon, and my instinct is, if you go out there and talk about the things you have done so well in the assembly, the passion you have for educating our children, the role that Federal Government needs to play to support our local schools, and the other issues, I think you'll do very well. And I hope we can be of help.

I want to thank Joe Andrew and Beth Dozoretz and all the people on our team for working with the Democratic Party. And I'd like to say a word of appreciation to everyone in San Diego who is responsible for the selection of my friend of 30 years Alan Bersin, the new superintendent of schools. I thank you.

When I saw Alan today—he's got a great gift for one-liners, which I have appropriated over the last 30 years. And so he came through the line today; he looked at me and said, "And I thought you had a hard job." *[Laughter]*

But let me also say I have a very special feeling about this community. I've had some wonderful days here. I've had some wonderful family vacation days here. As you noted, Hillary just got back from Macedonia and a trip to Northern Ireland—a brief trip to Northern Ireland, where we're working to try to close the last gaps in the peace process there—and couldn't be here. And I talked to her this morning on the way down, and she was quite jealous that I was coming back to San Diego. We have nothing but wonderful memories of this great place.

Also, in 1992, when the Vice President and I carried this county, it was the first time since Harry Truman had carried it in 1948 that a Democrat had carried it—and looking at the signs, pro and con, on the way in today, I would say there's still some disagreement about what ought to happen. *[Laughter]*

Let me say, you're here at a fundraiser for the Democratic Party. And I'm grateful for that. I'd like you to know why I'm here. I mean, I'm not running for anything. Maybe I'll try to get on a school board someday, but I won't be on the ballot in the year 2000.

I am here because I believe in what I have done and because I believe that whatever good has come of the country because of my Presidency, I should be grateful for—but I am under no illusion that the most important thing was me, the most important thing was the vision that we shared for America and the ideas we pursued. And I believe it needs to continue. That's why I'm here. And when you leave, I hope you'll be convinced that that's why you were here.

When I ran for President in late 1991 and '92, it was not something I had intended to do until just a few months before in that year. I was very concerned about the problems that our country was having and that there didn't seem to be any driving vision. And I don't think you can run any great enterprise without one.

I also believed—as a Governor—as President Bush said, a Governor of a small Southern State—that most of the rhetoric I heard in Washington, unfortunately often from both parties, bore so little relationship to the world I was living in and the problems I was facing and the way I was having to deal with them. And it seemed to me that we needed

to change the nature of the debate and to come up with some basic ideas that were not then driving policy in Washington, that were new but rooted in the very old-fashioned vision of our country.

I have always believed that when Americans widen the circle of opportunity for all responsible citizens, when they deepen the meaning of freedom, when they strengthen the bonds of community, we do well. And so I went out and said I want a 21st century America where every responsible citizen has the chance to live out his or her dreams, where across all of the differences we have we are bound together more closely as one community and where we are still the world's leading force for peace and freedom and prosperity. And I think to get there we have to think about things in a different way.

For example, I think that we have to think about rewarding entrepreneurs in a way that expands the middle class and gives more poor people a chance to work their way into the middle class. I think we have to believe that we can grow the economy and preserve and even improve the environment. I think we have to believe that we can create a country in which people can succeed, not only at work but at home, in the most important job of any society, raising children. I think we have to believe that we can reduce the welfare rolls and put people in the work force in a way that does not require them to stop being good parents to their children. I think we have to reduce the crime rate, not only by doing a better job of enforcement, but a better job of prevention—something Mr. Bersin did in his previous incarnation as your U.S. Attorney.

Anyway, those are just some of the ideas. I believe that we had to be a much more active force for peace in the world, but I thought we had to be willing to use our power to stand up against terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and ethnic and religious cleansing and killing. And most of the last 6 years have been an effort by the Vice President and our administration, our Cabinet, and all the rest of us, working with me to try to find ways to put those ideas into concrete policies and make them come alive in the country.

Along the way, we've given the American people the smallest Government they've had since John Kennedy was President. Federal establishment is now the smallest it's been since 1962. But it is more active in trying to create the conditions and give people the tools to solve their own problems. And I believe that these ideas resonate pretty well with Americans, whether they're Democrats or independents or Republicans, because they make sense and because they are related to the world toward which we are moving.

Now, there is a lot of the future present in this room in what you all do. It seems to me that the two most dominant elements in the world of the 21st century toward which we're moving, are the explosion of technology and the increasing interdependence of people across national lines. Even our biggest threats grow out of that. We are increasingly vulnerable because of the openness of our society and the openness of our technology to people who would use this for destructive forces.

And what we have to do now is to look ahead to the unmet challenges of the country and bring sort of the same sort of common-sense commitment to that vision. It means politically we have to have good candidates properly financed to have a good message to run in the year 2000 for all of our positions. They have to know why they're running.

You know, whenever anyone comes up to me and asks me if they should run for office, I always say, "Why do you want the job?" And you better be able to tell a total stranger in 30 seconds and then have a 5-minute version on why you want the job. And if you can't answer that question, you shouldn't run. And if you can, ignore the polls and run.

And so I think it's important that we do that. But in the last election, where we had a historic victory in the House of Representatives, you should know that we were outspent by \$100 million. But we still won seats in the House and didn't lose any in the Senate—a truly historic election—because we had a message. We knew what we were for; we knew what we were against; and we had enough to get it across. So it's very important that you're here.

Now, as we look ahead, let me say that in the next 2 years, with all the energy I have,

I'm going to do what I can to get our country to reach across party lines to deal with the aging of America, to reform Social Security and Medicare and do something about making long-term care more available, and helping people save for their own retirement more. I'm going to do what I can to make sure that we finish our work of modernizing our schools, help to modernize facilities; make sure we hook all the classrooms up to the Internet; provide more opportunities for more charter schools, like you have in this school district; and other things that will raise standards; and dramatically increase the resources we provide to local schools for after-school programs, summer school programs, mentoring programs, the kind of things that will help our kids, so that we can have more uniform standards of excellence in education. And there are many other things that I intend to do.

The Vice President has a livability agenda we worked very hard on that we're going to try to pass to try to help all of our communities deal more with traffic problems, with having the need for more green space, as well as setting aside more land in reserve.

I'm very—by the way, just parenthesis—I'm very proud of the fact that our administration has protected more land in perpetuity than any administration in the history of the Republic except those of Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt. And I think 50 years from now people will be very grateful—even the people in the red rocks area of Utah, who are still kind of mad at me about it, I think they will be grateful.

So there are a lot of things that still have to be done. But I have to tell you, if you ask me to describe in a sentence what I think is the most important outstanding work of the country, I would say it is an attempt to get people to define community in terms of our common humanity instead of our evident differences, both at home and abroad.

And if you look at what happened in Littleton, there are many tragedies and doubtless, a lot of the elements, as it's all unpacked, will turn out to be highly peculiar to the two young men in question, and the whole psychology of murder-suicide. But there is also, clearly, an element of—part of what drove them over the brink was the fact that they

were in a group that was disrespected, and they developed a grievance against those they thought were disrespecting them. And then since they thought they were disrespected, they looked around and they found another group—the minority students in the schools, in this case—that they could then look down on.

I was just in Texas with the daughter of James Byrd, Jr., the African-American who was dragged to death and virtually dismembered by people who killed him because he was black—you remember, about a year ago. I was, the other night in Washington, at the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights dinner with the mother of Matthew Shepard, the young man who was killed in Wyoming not so very long ago because he was gay.

And I say this to point out, if America wants to do good around the world—I appreciate what Congressman Filner said about Kosovo, and I want to come back to that—but if you want to do good around the world, we've first got to try to be good at home. And we have to recognize that there is something deep within all of us that represents the oldest curse of human society, which is the propensity to hate the other people who are different from us.

And if you look, isn't it ironic—here we are, you and I were talking about how we had to break everybody's mindset of believing that in order to grow the economy, you had to have industrial age energy use patterns. We had to modernize energy use. But if you look at what they're fighting about in Kosovo or what they fought about in Bosnia or what they slaughtered over in Rwanda or what the continuing turmoil of the Middle East is about or Northern Ireland, they're not arguing about who is going to get the franchise to sell solar panels or who gets to represent Microsoft.

Interesting, isn't it? We're thinking—look at all the high-tech activity in this room. We're thinking about a 21st century in which we want our kids to have pen pals in every conceivable country of the world, travel around, you know, do unimaginable things because of all these technological wonders. We all expect to live to be 125 because by—within the next couple of years the human genome will be totally unpacked and the