market initiative. I like the fact that we will give you tax breaks, tax credits, and loan guarantees to invest in poor countries around the world. I don't want to take them away. I just want you to have exactly the same incentives to invest in poor neighborhoods, in inner-city America and Appalachia and the Mississippi Delta and Native American reservations and all those other places.

So I ask you to think about this. This is a night you can be proud of your country. This is a night you can be grateful for the economic prosperity that we have enjoyed, that we have the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates we have ever recorded, that wages are rising for people in all income groups. We can be grateful for that. And you have expressed your gratitude by coming here and giving these funds, for which I am grateful.

But I want you to support our party not just so that Dick Gephardt can be Speaker and Charlie Rangel can be chairman, we can have 3 or 4 chairmen and 19 subcommittee chairs, but for what Mr. Gephardt said: because if we are in these positions of responsibility, we will show up for work every day. And we will not be interested simply in accumulating power but in using the fleeting power we have been given by the American people to advance the cause, the future, and the hopes of ordinary citizens from all walks of life.

I believe—it's not fashionable to say, I guess, but politics and public service are noble endeavors if they are informed by a high purpose. I have never thought that I was going to be President for life, and I have never thought one bit of power I exercised really belonged to me. It was something that was loaned to me for a little while by the American people, thanks to the remarkable Constitution under which we live.

And so if you give us this kind of responsibility, we will ask the American people to search their consciousness—and to serve their—search their consciences, to think and to feel what we still must do to deepen the meaning of freedom and widen the circle of opportunity and strengthen the bonds of community. That's what a lot of our fights are about. That's what the Patients' Bill of Rights is about. If I get sick tonight, I'm going to be fine. Unless God gets ready to take me home, I'll have the best health care in the world. I don't need it, and neither do most of you.

That's why we're trying to have America join the mainstream and stop being the only country in the world that doesn't even have sensible, commonsense regulation of these handguns, to keep them out of the hands of criminals and kids, and to keep the assault weapons away from the children. The Secret Service is taking care of me; I don't need that. And if anything happened to me, besides, I've already had more life than 99 percent of the people who ever lived. [*Laughter*] I don't have any gripe.

But all those kids—Dick Gephardt reminded us, 13 kids get killed every day, get shot and die and don't have the life that I have had or the life that you have had that has brought you to this point. And I have been so moved by the people at Littleton and how they have responded and the courage and dignity with which they have borne their awful fate, and the way they have asked us not to let their children die in vain.

But every day, for years, 13 kids die in ones and twos, on the mean streets and the tough alleys in which they live. We want to do something about that, and we can. It's why we've tried to make college affordable for everybody and put a computer in every child's schoolroom. Our kids—we don't need that; our kids can have their computers.

I say that not to make you feel better than our political adversaries, either. I say that to make this simple point. The same thing that makes us believe that people are better off getting along than they are fighting over their racial or religious differences makes us believe that we ought to have universal excellence in education, universal quality in health care, a strong economy that includes everyone. But because we know down deep inside that that's being smart selfish, we know that we'll be better off and our children will be better off and our country will be stronger if we're not just sailing along alone.

If you ask me what the single most significant difference between the two parties is today and why it is so important that you're here and why we had the historic victory we had in 1998, even though we were outspent

by $100 million, it is because we believe, truly, that we are all God's children, that none of us inherently is better than any other, and that we don't believe, even if we are in the elite, in just the elite and their welfare. And this is not about class warfare, either. This is about whether you believe that individuals and families and businesses are better off when they're part of a fabric of a strong community, where everybody's trying to give everybody else a hand up. And if we ever do it right, there will be no more handouts. If we had enough hand ups, there would be no more handouts.

So I want you to leave here being proud of what you did tonight, but I don't want you to quit. It's a long road between now and 2000. And we're not getting much encouragement from most of our friends on the other side of the aisle in campaign finance reform, because they figured if they outdid us by $100 million in '98, maybe they can have a $200 million advantage in 2000.

But one thing we showed them in 1998, partly thanks to a record African-American turnout, one thing we showed them, it doesn't matter if they have more money than you do if you have enough to be heard. If you have enough to be heard, if you have enough to make those telephone calls and to get those doors knocked on and to send those letters out and to put those ads on and to be heard if you stand for something, if the power is not an end in itself but to be used as a gift, given for a limited period of time by the people to strengthen the common life of our country, we've proved that great things can happen.

You have done a good thing tonight for your country. I want you to think about it and continue to speak for it. And when people ask you why you were here tonight, I hope some of the words that we have said will give you an answer, because you want us to go forward together.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:12 p.m. at the National Museum for Women in the Arts. In his remarks, he referred to Robert L. Johnson, chairman and chief executive officer, BET Holdings, Inc.; musician Lionel Hampton; John Stroger, president, Cook County Board of Commissioners, Chicago, IL; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Lottie Shackelford, vice chair, Democratic National Committee; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Excerpt of Videotape Remarks to the to the United States Conference of Mayors Annual Meeting

June 11, 1999

The Senate majority even wants to kill our successful COPS program, the very community police who help cut crime in neighborhoods all across America. My balanced budget, on the other hand, extends our commitment to community police into the 21st century, to put even more officers on our streets, especially in the toughest neighborhoods, and give them the tools they need to make those streets safe.

Now is the time to build on our success, not to undermine it. And it's also time—high time—to do more to keep guns out of the wrong hands. But the House leadership seems intent on ignoring the lessons of Littleton, the lessons of all of our recent past. They want to water down the commonsense, modest gun bill passed by the Senate. According to news reports, the NRA is crowing that the House leadership gave them 90 percent of the new loopholes they wanted in the gun show law.

Now, clearly, there's a difference of approach here. We have a simple strategy that is already reducing crime all across America. We want more police on the street and fewer guns in the hands of criminals and children. They want more guns on the street and fewer cops. I think that's the wrong approach for America. The House leadership should heed the clear voice of the American people and stop listening to the deadly backstage whispers of the gun lobby.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 4:25 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room for later transmission to the U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting in New Orleans, LA. The release made available by the Office of the Press Secretary was a partial transcript of the President's remarks. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.