

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

For Immediate Release

April 28, 1997

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON,
PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH, PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER,
PRESIDENT GERALD FORD, GENERAL COLIN POWELL,
MRS. NANCY REAGAN, AND VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE

Independence National Historical Park
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

9:49 A.M. EDT

GENERAL POWELL: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. You look wonderful out there this morning. They were worried last night that the rain would wash this out, and as early as this morning there were calls flying around town at 5:00 a.m. in the morning, should we move it. The answer was, it will not rain, not on this parade, not today, not with what we've got going on. And it did not and it will not. (Applause.)

Over 200 years ago, a group of volunteers gathered on this sacred spot to found a new nation. In perfect words, they voiced their dreams and aspirations of an imperfect world. They pledged their lives, their fortune and their sacred honor to secure inalienable rights given by God for life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness -- pledged that they would provide them to all who would inhabit this new nation.

They look down on us today in spirit, with pride for all we have done to keep faith with their ideals and their sacrifices. Yet, despite all we have done, this is still an imperfect world. We still live in an imperfect society! Despite more than two centuries of moral and material progress, despite all our efforts to achieve a more perfect union, there are still Americans who are not sharing in the American Dream. There are still Americans who are not sharing in the American Dream. There are still Americans who wonder: is the journey there for them, is the dream there for them, or, whether it is, at best, a dream deferred.

The great American poet, Langston Hughes, talked about a dream deferred, and he said, "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun, or fester like a sore and then run? Does it stink like rotten meat, or crust and sugar over like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags, like a heavy load. Or, does it explode?"

For too many young Americans, that dream deferred does sag like a heavy load that's pushing them down into the ground, and they wonder if they can rise up with that load. And as we see too often in our daily life, it does explode in violence, in youngsters falling dead, shot by other youngsters. It does explode, and it has the potential to explode our society.

So today, we gather here today to pledge that the dream must no longer be deferred and it will never, as long as we can do anything about it, become a dream denied. That is why we are here, my friends. (Applause.) We gather here to pledge that those of us who are more fortunate will not forsake those who are less fortunate. We are a compassionate and caring people. We are a generous people. We will reach down, we will reach back, we will reach across to help our brothers and sisters who are in need.

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Above all, we pledge to reach out to the most vulnerable members of the American family, our children. As you've heard, up to 15 million young Americans today are at risk. They are at risk of growing up unskilled, unlearned or, even worse, unloved. They are at risk of growing up physically or psychologically abused. They are at risk of growing up addicted to the pathologies and poisons of the street. They are at risk of bringing up children into the world before they, themselves have grown up. They are at risk of never growing up at all. Fifteen million young lives are at risk, may not make it unless we care enough to do something about it.

In terms of numbers, the task may seem staggering. But if we look at the simple needs that these children have, then the task is manageable, the goal is achievable. We know what they need. They need an adult caring person in their life, a safe place to learn and grow, a healthy start, marketable skills and an opportunity to serve so that early in their lives they learn the virtue of service so that they can reach out then and touch another young American in need.

These are basic needs that we commit ourselves today, we promise today. We are making America's promise today to provide to those children in need. This is a grand alliance. It is an alliance between government and corporate America and nonprofit America, between our institutions of faith, but especially between individual Americans.

You heard the governors and the mayors, and you'll hear more in a little minute that says the real answer is for each and every one of us, not just here in Philadelphia, but across this land -- for each and every one of us to reach out and touch someone in need.

All of us can spare 30 minutes a week or an hour a week. All of us can give an extra dollar. All of us can touch someone who doesn't look like us, who doesn't speak like us, who may not dress like us, but, by God, needs us in their lives. And that's what we all have to do to keep this going.

And so there's a spirit of Philadelphia here today. There's a spirit of Philadelphia that we saw yesterday in Germantown. There is a spirit of Philadelphia that will leave Philadelphia tomorrow afternoon and spread across this whole nation -- 30 governors will go back and spread it; over a 100 mayors will go back and spread it, and hundreds of others, leaders around this country who are watching will go back and spread it. Corporate America will spread it, nonprofits will spread it. And each and every one of us will spread it because it has to be done, we have no choice. We cannot leave these children behind if we are going to meet the dreams of our founding fathers.

And so let us all join in this great crusade. Let us make sure that no child in America is left behind, no child in America has their dream deferred or denied. We can do it. We can do it because we are Americans. We are Americans who draw our strength from this place. We are Americans who believe to the depth of our hearts that this is not a land that was put here by historic accident, it is a land that was put here by Divine Providence who told us to be good stewards of the land, but especially to be good stewards of each other. Divine Providence gave us this land, blessed it and told us always to be proud to call it America.

And so we go forward. Let's go save our children. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

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VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Thank you. (Applause.) Thank you very much. Thank you, Oprah. To all of the distinguished guests; President and Mrs. Clinton, and former President and Mrs. Bush; former President Ford; Mrs. Reagan; General Powell and Mrs. Powell; to the governors and mayors and senators and congressmen and Cabinet members; and most of all, the volunteers: This is an historic day. And I want to thank you, Oprah, and once again thank you, General Colin Powell, for organizing this project and for standing strong for America's children. We're grateful to you, the whole country is. (Applause.)

In the Bible, Proverbs counsels us, "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it is in your power to act." And later in Isaiah, we learn, "If you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry, and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness and your night will become like the noon day."

Today, in America, more and more citizens are realizing that it is within our power to act. And across America, noon day is spreading a warm light of compassion and commitment, a new spirit of service in America. We're seeing it right now in North Dakota, where tens of thousands of relief workers and volunteers responded instantly and selflessly to those terrible floods. President Clinton and I have seen these quiet American heroes in action firsthand, and we have all been inspired by what they are doing right now to help neighbors in distress. That's the American way.

We saw this spirit of service six days ago on Earth Day, Americans of today honoring their duty to Americans of tomorrow by pledging to be good stewards of the environment -- to make sure subsequent generations inherit air, water and land that is clean, healthy and safe.

We saw it 10 days ago on NetDay, when tens of thousands of Americans came together to pull cable, install software, hook up computers and connect America's classrooms to the Information Superhighway. And we saw it last year, especially throughout the South, when neighbors, black and white, joined hands to hold back the forces of hate and rebuild churches and synagogues and other houses of worship that had burned to the ground, and say, we won't stand for it here in the United States of America. We're one nation, one community, under God and we're coming together to help one another. (Applause.)

And we saw it yesterday here in Philadelphia on Germantown Avenue. This spirit service is both rich with tradition and fresh with possibility. It is as timeless as Independence Day and as modern as NetDay, as old as America and as young as AmeriCorps. And we, all of us, must do everything we can do to keep this spirit growing.

The work of this summit is just beginning. Its goal, of course: to provide 2 million young Americans access to opportunity and opportunity and the fundamental resources they need by the year 2000 -- 2 million by 2000. We can begin by really hearing what others have to say. Indeed, sometimes the greatest act of service we can perform is to listen carefully, especially when we listen to our children.

So let's listen to them now. Two weeks ago, the summit invited young playwrights and students from all over America to create an open letter that would tell grownups how they see the goal of this summit. Here now is a peek behind the scenes at these young Americans wrestling with the same issues that confront us all.

(A film is shown.)

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PRESIDENT FORD: As we meet at this historic hall to begin this crusade of giving, sharing and caring for the American family across the land, especially the 15 million young girls and boys who need our help, we should be optimistic, not pessimistic.

Sadly, every day the news media reports the growing number of broken homes, inadequate single family problems, drug problems rampant in our schools and on our streets, with gang warfare loose in metropolitan communities. Should we surrender? Should we capitulate to the worst elements and the challenges in our society? The answer is, emphatically, no. (Applause.)

We in America, thank goodness, have the tools to win this war. The solution is local and personal with generous financial support across the land. Yes, in our hometowns, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Canadian border to the Caribbean, people and organizations can turn disasters to success.

I personally am optimistic because I've seen firsthand a Boy Scout scoutmaster take a tenderfoot or a troop from the worst circumstances and redirect their lives. The same, of course, is true with the Girl Scouts; the Campfire Girls. Again, as mentors we see identical benefits, from the Big Brothers, Big Sisters, the Boys and Girls Clubs throughout America. During the terrible economic Depression of the 1930s, I witnessed firsthand the uplifting impact of an athletic coach on a player or on a team when their families were on welfare or actually in bread lines. Today, the parent coaches of Little League teams do a superb job as mentors, teaching not only teamwork, but athletic skills and healthy habits.

A pat on the back and sound advice can help a troubled boy or a troubled girl in despair. A top-notch mentor can combine winning the game and winning the life. Our churches and synagogues, from the pulpit to the Sunday school teacher, can reach out, embrace the youth in their congregation. I've always admired the wonderful, unselfish work of the individual members of the Salvation Army. Today they are successful mentors because of their spotless dedication to helping America's youth.

A major goal of this summit is to recruit voluntary mentors who are willing to listen to and stand by a youth through joys as well as frustrations. Our mentors must have that unique ability to help the child discover and develop his or her talents. Right now, young Americans need 2 million volunteer mentors who will be caring adults. We warmly welcome volunteers from all walks of life in this great land to join in this critical crusade. By stepping forward in this crisis, you can have a tremendous impact and a tremendous benefit in the challenge to save our youth. What we do here and what you do in this decade can make a better America for the next century.

I say to all of you throughout the land, the door of opportunity is wide, wide open. Please join Colin Powell and all the others at this historic summit. This is truly a call to national service. Thank you. (Applause.)

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PRESIDENT CARTER: (speaking by videotape.) -- to a child finding his or her way in the world, this should not be a privilege, it should be a right. If your street isn't safe, fear is your constant companion. If your school and playground aren't safe, your focus is on surviving, not learning. If your home isn't safe, you have nowhere else to go. This summit recognizes this by designating a safe place one of the five fundamental resources. Kids need a place where they can just be kids, where they can play, learn, grow without constantly looking over their shoulders.

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At the Carter Center, we have a program called Atlanta Project, founded on the bedrock of volunteerism. A couple of years ago thousands of volunteers fanned out across some of Atlanta's poorest neighborhoods. Going door to door, these volunteers asked their neighbors to list their major concerns and to suggest ways to improve their quality of life. It will not surprise you to learn that the number one concern was safety.

It's true in cities across our nation. Activities that most of us take for granted, such as going out to play ball or sitting in a school classroom are fraught with peril for children and their parents. Let me share with you some of the stories I heard. One woman said that she never goes out after dark and doesn't allow her children to go out, either. "We are," she said, "prisoners in our home." Another mother told Rosalyn and me that she has knots in her stomach from the time her young son leaves for school until he returns. Because of the violence of her community, she's waiting for the day when he doesn't come home at all. "It won't really surprise me," she said.

That was one of the saddest statements I've ever heard. Several young people, both boys and girls, talked about the pressure they feel to join gangs. Without his gang to protect him, one young man said, he was sure he would be dead. A 12-year-old boy said his ambition in life is to own a semiautomatic machine gun. "I don't expect to live past the age of 20," he told us, "so why does it matter what I do with my life?"

Finally, we spoke with several young women -- children, really -- pregnant with their first, second, or even third child, who are resigned to a life of poverty and fear. These are children whose spirits have been broken, who feel there's no hope for a brighter future. They and their parents do not have confidence in the very institutions -- law enforcement, the judicial system, schools -- that were set up to serve all people.

This summit can be the beginning of a renewed commitment to our children. But the real revolution will take place only if we carry this new spirit of Philadelphia back to our own neighborhoods and turn it into action. The divisions between those of us who have many opportunities and those who feel they have none are growing deeper. Children are dying, in body and spirit.

I urge you to reach out from the safety and security of your life and extend a helping hand to someone who really knows only fear. Hand in hand, we can create a network that will ensure that our children will do more than just survive, they will thrive. Thank you. (Applause.)

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MRS. REAGAN: Thank you. (Applause.) Thank you very much. Thank you, Christina, and thank you very much for asking me here today to help begin this wonderful campaign.

I wish so much that my husband could be here. He would remind us that we're celebrating the best of America, that unique heritage that has always inspired us -- individuals and organizations have banded together since our nation began to help when there was a need. Some have been at it for years. For instance, Save The Children began in 1932, and is continuing to help all over the world.

You know, in my experience, whether it was the foster grandparents program in California, or the private sector initiative in Washington, or the Just Say No campaign to stop drugs, I've always found that when I give I received tenfold in return.

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Ronnie's dream remains that America will be that shining city on the hill, and to make that dream come true we must never fall short in our efforts to ensure that every child in America can fly as high as his or her dreams will take them.

Ronnie is such a caring person. He's always been moved by human kindness. So, for him and for me, I ask a special favor of everyone watching or listening today. From this day forward, when someone asks you to help a child, just say, "yes." (Applause.) Thank you. (Applause.)

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PRESIDENT BUSH: The American Dream is one of the most stirring phrases I know, and it means so many things to so many people all over the world. It means the freedom to worship your own God in your own way without fear of persecution. It means freedom of speech and assembly, and, perhaps most importantly, the freedom to vote. And these are wonderful freedoms. But sometimes I'm afraid we all take them for granted.

And, yet, the American Dream also means something else. It means the opportunity to go as far in life as your abilities will take you. Anyone in America can aspire to be a doctor, a teacher, a police officer or even, as Oprah said, a President. But you can't get any of those important jobs if you don't have the opportunity to acquire the skills you need. You need to learn your job, whatever your dream, before you can do your job. And that's why I believe that the key to the American Dream is education.

And at the most basic level, it gets down to one "R" -- reading. Barbara and I are deeply troubled to know that 2,300 teenagers drop out of school every day. And this is more than a terrible loss to America, it's an epidemic. It just seems wrong that 6.5 million American kids between kindergarten and the 3rd grade are growing up illiterate. Something has gone wrong.

But I am thankful that something right is starting to happen at this summit, because Americans are starting to take it upon themselves to point our kids in the right direction on the road that leads to the American Dream. And the commitments made toward this end are simply terrific. Continental Cable Vision is going to provide free Internet connections to 3 million youngsters by the year 2000. Another great organization, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, is establishing volunteer tutoring and literacy centers in 6,500 towns and cities across this country. (Applause.) And another, Scholastic Books, will donate one million books to the American Reads project to help us reach our goal of a hundred percent literacy for every child by grade three. (Applause.)

You know, humanity has produced few documents more beautiful than the one that Jefferson, Madison and the other founding fathers sweated over here in Philadelphia some 220 years ago -- life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are magnificent words to live by. But you can't understand them if you can't read them.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

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PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, I want to begin by taking Matthew and Teevee (phonetic) and Christina and Jamil (phonetic) and Christy (phonetic) for introducing the Presidents and Mrs. Reagan. They reminded us of what this summit is all about.

I thank President and Mrs. Bush, President and Mrs. Carter, President Ford, Mrs. Reagan, Vice President and Mrs. Gore

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for their devotion to this endeavor. I thank Harris Wofford and Bob Goodwin, the President of the Points of Light Foundation; Henry Cisneros and Linda Robb; and all the others who have worked for this day. I say a special word of thanks to all the public officials who have come from all over our country -- members of Congress, governors, lieutenant governors and others. But, particularly, I want to thank General Colin Powell.

At our last meeting, when he was about to retire as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I asked him if there was another mission which might bring him back into public life. He said he wanted to help children who didn't have what they needed to succeed in life and who needed the chance to serve America.

Well, General, this may be your most important mission, and I want to thank you for reenlisting. Thank you. (Applause.)

I thank my friend, Mayor Rendell, and the wonderful people of Philadelphia; Governor Ridge and the people of Pennsylvania who have made us feel so welcome.

We come here before the house where America was born. The place where we, the people, took the first step on our centuries-old journey to form a more perfect union. On the last day of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin walked out of this hall and encountered a woman anxious to know what had gone on inside. She asked him, "Well, Doctor, what have we got? A monarchy or a republic?" Mr. Franklin replied, "A republic -- if you can keep it."

For more than 200 years, we have struggled to keep this republic. It is an enduring and endless challenge, for endemic in human nature and human frailty are successive generations of problems. But we have always succeeded in making our union more perfect. Consider how imperfect it was when we had people in this country who weren't even treated as people, but slaves. Consider how imperfect it was when children could be forced to work long hours into the night in dangerous conditions. Consider how imperfect it was when women, now more than half the population of America, could not even vote.

So when you get discouraged, remember, we have succeeded in over 200 years in forming a more perfect union. (Applause.) We have succeeded because we've had a brilliant free enterprise system. We have succeeded because we had flexible constitutional, evolving, effective government at every level. But we have succeeded mostly because in the gaps between what is done by government and what is done by the private economy, citizens have found ways to step forward and move our country forward, and lift our people up. Citizen service is the story of our more perfect union.

Now we live in one of the great moments of change in our history, more full of promise, as President Ford said, than any period of America's past. More of these children behind me, and more of these children out here on these streets of Philadelphia, will have more chances to live out the future of their dreams than any generation of American children in history if the citizens of this country step forward to fill the gaps in their lives and in our national life to form a more perfect union. (Applause.)

But let us not be blind to the facts. Even with all the progress that together we have made -- with 12 million new jobs and a record drop in welfare rolls and years of dropping crime rates -- you and I know that millions of our children are being left behind in lives of too much danger, too many drugs, too little hope and not enough opportunity. You and I know that too many people are out there doing the very best they can and still not keeping up, much less moving forward.

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Yes, there are things that the government should do. None of us stand here, President and former Presidents, to say that we must not do our responsibility. Of course, we should do better with our schools. Of course, we should open the doors of college to everyone. Of course, all our children should have health care coverage. Of course, we can do more to make our streets safer. But even if we do everything we should, you and I know that a lot of the problems facing our children are problems of the human heart -- problems that can only be resolved when there is a one-on-one connection, community by community, neighborhood by neighborhood, street by street, home by home, with every child in this country entitled to live out their God-given destiny. You know it is true. (Applause.)

I am proud of the fact that because of the computer and microsolutions to problems we don't need big government bureaucracies to do some of the things that used to be done. But as I have said repeatedly, the era of big government may be over, but the era of big challenges for our country is not, and so we need an era of big citizenship. That is why we are here, and that is what we should promise ourselves we will do. (Applause.)

Let me say one other thing, too. Look at these kids behind me. They're America's future -- all of them. And when you think of what is tearing the world apart today -- the racial, the ethnic, the religious hatreds, from Bosnia to Northern Ireland to the Middle East to Africa -- and you look at the children behind me and you realize what a gift from God our diversity is, you know that if we know each other, if we serve each other, if we work with each other, one of the things that will happen is, we will make sure that our diversity is a rich resource to make our union more perfect, not an instrument of our national undoing in the 21st century. (Applause.)

We cherish our citizen volunteers. There are already more than 90 million of us, and after this summit there will be more. Especially because General Powell, Ray Chambers and others have organized a follow-up to this. And the really important work of this summit will begin after my talk's over, when you go into the workshops and the meetings and make a commitment that in every community there will be a systematic, disciplined, comprehensive effort to deal with the five areas outlined as the challenges for our young people. That is what really matters here.

Young people, above all, however, have the time, the energy and the idealism for this kind of citizen service. Before they have their own families, the young can make a unique contribution to the family of America. In doing so, they can acquire the habit of service and get a deeper understanding of what it really means to be a citizen. That is the main reason, perhaps, we are here.

In Philadelphia, the Superintendent of Schools is working to make service the expected thing in elementary and middle schools. Maryland has required it in high school. And I challenge every state and every school in this country at least to offer in a disciplined, organized way every young person in school a chance to serve. A recent survey said if they were just asked, over 90 percent of them would do it. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves if we don't give them the chance to do that. (Applause.)

Let me also say, of course, that we need some of them to serve full-time. They do, you know, in the Peace Corps. And -- (applause) -- we have some former Peace Corps volunteers out there applauding. But we should all applaud them because they have helped to change the world for the better. (Applause.) And they do in AmeriCorps, the national service program that was started in our administration. (Applause.) The idea behind AmeriCorps was to instill an ethic of mutual responsibility in

our children so that young people could improve their own lives in return for improving the life of America.

Since its creation, 50,000 young Americans have earned college tuition by serving their communities in many ways. And we know that the typical full-time community servant recruits at least a dozen more volunteers. I saw that in North Dakota when I went to see what the Red River had done to Grand Forks and to the rest of North Dakota and Minnesota. I saw our young AmeriCorps volunteers and I knew that because they were able to serve full-time they'd be there when the waters receded, the mess was there, the people had to put their lives back together and the cameras were gone. I saw it again yesterday when we were working on the streets and on the stadium and on the schools.

The will to serve has never been stronger and more of our young people want to serve full-time. But there's a limit to what we can do now. And, yet, there is a solution -- ironically, one I came to right here in Philadelphia. For here in Philadelphia a minister who is a friend of mine, Reverend Tony Campolo, is helping to organize a movement among churches to get churches to sponsor 10,000 full-time youth volunteers to take a year off from college or defer a year from college under the sponsorship of their churches.

The churches will do what we do in AmeriCorps, helping to provide for the living expenses of the young people. But I think we ought to say to them, at the very least, it shouldn't cost you any money to serve. And so if you've got a college loan and you take a year off to serve under the sponsorship of a religious organization, I'm going to propose legislation to say during that year no interest should accrue on that college loan. It should not cost you any money to serve your country. (Applause.)

But we can do more. We can double the impact of AmeriCorps with the help of our religious and charitable institutions. I want to challenge every charity, every religious group, every community group and their business supporters to give young people the support they need to do a year of community service. If you do that, then in our budget now we will be able to give every one of them the scholarship that AmeriCorps volunteers get for their year of community service. Work with your churches, work with your community organizations, and we can provide that to young people. (Applause.)

Put them to work as mentors, as teachers, as organizers of other volunteers, and we can double the number of full-time youth volunteers by adding another 50,000. By the year 2000, that would mean that in eight years, more children will have served full-time on our streets than have worked in the entire history of the Peace Corps around the world. We can change America, folks, if we'll do it together, hand in hand, community by community. (Applause.)

The same thing is true of the police corps, which offers young people a chance to pay for their college education if they'll be police officers for four years. We can triple the number of young people who do that, and I intend to try. We need more young people going as teachers into our schools. And we must support them in that.

We have to understand that we need a balance between volunteers on a part-time basis, volunteers on a full-time basis, and there is no conflict between the two. We have to understand that we value America's free enterprise system, we know we need our government, but there will never be a time when we need citizen servants more than we need them today, because these children have got to be saved one by one. (Applause.)

And let me say to all of you, the most important people here today are not the Presidents or the General or the

governors or the senators. The most important people are those who teach the student to read; who save the health of the infant; who give help to families when all help seems gone. The most important title today is not Senator, Vice President, General, Governor or President. It is, as Harry Truman reminded us so long ago, the most important title any of us will ever hold in this country is the title of citizen.

This is our republic. Let us keep it. Thank you.
(Applause.)

And now, I would like to call upon Mrs. Reagan and my fellow Presidents to join me in signing this Summit Declaration, "A Call to Citizen Service to Fulfill the Promise of America." We do this in the hope that in the weeks and months to come, millions and millions and millions of you will join us in putting your names to the declaration, devoting your lives to the mission and beginning the era of big citizenship for the United States.

Thank you and God bless you all. (Applause.)

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10:59 A.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

For Immediate Release

April 27, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. CLINTON,
THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. BUSH IN
PRESENTATION OF
PRESIDENT'S SERVICE AWARDS

Exhibit Hall A, Convention Center
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

9:10 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I like that version of "Hail To The Chief." Maybe the Marine Band could pick it up. (Laughter.)

Ladies and gentlemen, these President's Service Awards are traditionally presented at the White House every year, but Hillary and I are profoundly honored to be here this evening with President and Mrs. Bush, General Powell and all others who are part of this very important ceremony.

As all of you know, we're here along with President Ford, President and Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Reagan, here in Philadelphia where our great democracy began, for the first President's Summit for America's future -- to mobilize every community and challenge every citizen; to give our young people a chance to live up to their God-given potential; and to ask our young people to become citizen servants, too.

So tonight we're going to give these awards, very appropriately, in the categories that have been set out for the challenge to America, the categories that General Powell talked about in his moving opening remarks. And I'm going to have the honor of recognizing the caring adults. I'm pleased to be joined tonight by a man who has dedicated his entire life to meeting the challenge of service, Harris Wofford. (Applause.)

MR. WOFFORD: Thank you, Mr. President, and I salute you and Mrs. Clinton for all you have done to bring out the best in America through national service, student service, senior service, citizen service, and to define this new era of ours as the era of big citizens.

Now, in order to achieve the promise of America, we must go forth from this place here inspired by these award winners, like Olympic torch-carriers, and carry the challenge they have given to us here to our homes, our neighborhoods, our communities, from sea to shining sea. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: You know, you might have guessed that before he headed our nation's citizens service effort and the Corporation for National Service, Harris Wofford was in politics -- (laughter) -- the Senator from Pennsylvania. (Applause.) But before that, he was a college president; before that, a founder of the Peace Corps; a top aide to President Kennedy; a friend and ally of Dr. Martin Luther King. Hardly any American living today better personifies citizens service than Harris Wofford, and I thank him for that. (Applause.)

As I said, we begin by recognizing that every single child needs a caring adult in his or her life to teach and guide

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them. Every child needs to know that he or she is profoundly important to some grownup.

The three Americans we honor now have devoted themselves to meeting this challenge. Marjorie Klein knows that parents are our children's first teachers, and she's doing everything she can to help them. At 20 inner-city schools throughout the Philadelphia area, PACT, or Parents And Children Together, the organization Marjorie founded, brings parents into the classroom to read to the children and to help their children learn to read. At the same time, parents can improve their own literacy and tutoring skills, and they can even earn college credit.

We salute Marjorie Klein and PACT for their tremendous commitment to families and our children.

(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

Earl Phelan deeply believes that mentoring is the key to young people's success. Through B.E.L.L., or Building Enterprises for Learning and Living, the organization he helped to found, he has given hundred of African American young adults the chance to be role models and tutors to inner-city elementary school students throughout the greater Boston area. Under their tutelage those children are thriving, their futures are brighter and therefore so are ours.

Tonight we honor Earl Phelan for his remarkable contribution to our American community.

(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

Pat Esparza learned early in life that confidence and pride can make all the difference to a young girl's future. A single mother of three by the age of 19, she worked her way through school and devoted herself to helping at-risk girls. She founded Las Mariposas as a dance studio, but for the people of El Paso, Texas, it is a community treasure. At Las Mariposas hundreds of young girls have learned to dance and to value themselves and their culture.

We honor Pat for giving the young girls of her community the confidence and pride they need to succeed in life. Congratulations.

(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

All of them have helped to make sure that more of our young people do, in fact, have a caring adult to give them the support they need to build positive futures. Your work is an inspiration to all of us. I thank you for doing it and I hope all of us will now be more willing to follow your lead. God bless you. (Applause.)

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MRS. BUSH: All Americans hope and dream the best for our children. Every mother sees her child as marvelously gifted. And as watch them grow we wonder how these wonderful, unique qualities that we see in each of them will flourish. I remember thinking many years ago, maybe one of them would grow up to be a governor. (Laughter and applause.)

At the very least, we want our children to become independent, self-sufficient adults. We want our children to be able to support themselves, hopefully in a job that they really like. That's why every American child's access to marketable skills is one of the principles of the summit.

Right now, unless we all get involved, millions of our children are unlikely to require even the most basic of

skills. And it's probably not too much of a surprise to you that in my opinion -- you're a little fast for me -- (laughter) -- I can't believe I'm doing this -- (laughter) -- the key to every skill is the ability to read and comprehend. (Applause.)

You know, one of our children had a learning disability which made reading very difficult. Thanks to some wonderful teachers, loving support from his parents and a determined young boy who worked twice as hard as anyone else, he learned to read and went on to earn a master's degree. Unfortunately, not everyone has access to the superb teachers we did. We need more teachers in our classrooms. And we need to allow them to teach. (Applause.)

We also need more literacy volunteers to help children and adults alike who are struggling to learn how to read and write. The best place of all, of course, to volunteer is in our own homes. We are, after all, our children's first teachers and the home is their first school. Read to your children every single day. (Applause.) There's nothing more important you can do to help prepare them for a life-long love of reading and learning. Sharing a book is also a wonderful way to spend quality time with your children.

Now, joining me to honor the winner's of the President's Service Award is a literacy volunteer who also happens to be one of all of our favorite actors, a decent and fine man and a friend, John Travolta. (Applause.)

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MRS. BUSH: John, since you're a lot more familiar with award ceremonies than I am, would you begin?

MR. TRAVOLTA: Well, why not. Careers through Culinary Arts has helped thousands of students to make the transition from school to work and the food service in hospitality industries. For space, C-CAP depends on cooperation of school boards. For funds and equipment it depends on corporate sponsors. But the one thing it can always count on is the eagerness of kids to acquire a marketable skill. We recognize Richard Grausman.

MRS. BUSH: Right there.

(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

MRS. BUSH: Eight years ago, a group of employees of Lockheed Martin Vought Systems in Grand Prairie, Texas, decided to make a difference. They called themselves the In-Unity Incorporation, and began by tutoring 3rd graders at South Dallas School. Their numbers grew to include people from all walks of life and they were soon providing schools with pens, paper, notebooks and all the practical tools of the learning trade. Now they are mentoring college students, as well.

From In-Unity, Monroe Mays (phonetic).
Congratulations. (The award was presented.) (Applause.)

MR. TRAVOLTA: Six years ago, the volunteer members of a program called Art Start began offering children in New York City's homeless shelters the opportunity to experience the creative process. Volunteers took kids on field trips to the city's museums and other cultural centers.

Today, Art Start also reaches out to hundreds at-risk highschoolers, challenging them to communicate and to shape their visions with all of us. Art Starts founder is painter and photographer Scott Rosenberg.

(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

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PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you very much. Well, thanks. I'd tell you about the parachute jump, but -- (laughter) -- as Dana Carvey would say, "Not going to do it, wouldn't be prudent." So let me -- (laughter and applause.) I just faked out the TelePrompTer, it went dead. I'm dead. Listen -- (laughter) -- I've been up here -- you know how I feel about volunteerism. And you know the respect I have for those who are one of A Thousand Points of Light. And you know the respect I have for George Romney, whose picture was on here earlier. So let me just say, I am very pleased to be one of the presenters of the Service Awards.

And joining me tonight to do just that is one of the great stars and one of the most wonderful ladies I know, Brooke Shields Agassi. We love her, and she's here to join me in presenting these awards. (Applause.)

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MS. SHIELD: Five years ago, her church, the 100-year-old First Presbyterian, was considering moving out of the rundown Argenta section of North Little Rock, Arkansas. But Carolyn Ringer convinced the church and a 200-member volunteer boosters club that it was much better to revitalize than it was to run. So today, with the renovated homes and safer streets and the church itself as a center for the community, and all activities in the community, people are once again very proud to say that they're from Argenta.

So, everyone, please welcome Carolyn Ringer.
(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

PRESIDENT BUSH: The youth program of the Union Temple Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. reaches out with a meals program, with residential care, with counseling and job training to all young people in its community. And every young person who is fortunate enough to be a member of the church have the obligation and the privilege to participate from Union Temple, Lamont B. Mitchell. Lamont. Congratulations, sir.

(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

PRESIDENT BUSH: Not least among the organizations that are giving back to their communities are America's unions, working men and women. The Livingston-McLean County Building Trades Council in Bloomington, Illinois, in cooperation with the local Children's Foundation, have donated countless hours to constructing safe places for children. It includes a youth center and a terrific new park, which is called The Poetry Place. Here, representing the Building Trades Council, is John Penn. Congratulations, John.

(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

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MRS. CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you, Oprah, and thank all of you for gathering here in support of this summit and, more importantly, in support of the summit's goals. I am very pleased that one of the summit's goals is to ensure that every American child has a healthy start. And that is something that all of us should be committed to. And that means many different things. It means, yes, guaranteeing insofar as we can that every family has access to quality, affordable health care for their children. (Applause.) And, that cannot be just left to the government and to the medical professionals.

There is a role for many of us to play. We can, for instance, make sure that our communities are free from environmental hazards, toxic waste dumps, areas where children

and their families may possibly become sick or be injured. We can work to be sure that every pregnant woman has the prenatal care she needs and the support she requires to be a good mother. (Applause.)

We can work to make sure that every child is immunized, and we've made a lot of progress but we still have a way to go. And we can be sure that every child has access to the well child care and to the emergency care that we take for granted for our own children.

There are ways that we can enlist the volunteer spirit and the hard work that is necessary to reach out to every family so that in this area, which is so difficult for families to handle on their own, that when they have a sick child, when they face the terrible dilemma that many of us face of a child has been injured or come down with an illness, that there will be help. And that help will not just be in the finest medical care, but in a volunteer to sit by the bedside, to relieve the family, to provide that extra bit of nurturing and loving that families need in crisis.

So we are going to honor tonight and then make a commitment after this summit to do what we can in our own ways to ensure that healthy start for every child. And joining me to present the awards for people who are already doing that in their communities is Rob Reiner, who had committed himself to making it possible for every American to be aware of the new scientific evidence about what happens in the first three years of life so that we also can be helping our babies off to a good start by giving them the stimulation and the nurturing they need.

So I would like to ask Rob Reiner to join me for the presentation of these next awards. (Applause.)

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MRS. CLINTON: Well, in Fayette County, Kentucky, Baby Health Service has been providing infant formula to those in need since 1914. But growing children have growing needs, and 16 percent of the children in that county have no health insurance whatsoever. So the service has shifted its focus to health care. And last year, 70 volunteers provided free immunizations, checkups and medication to 3,000 children.

Accepting the President's Service Award on behalf of the volunteer physicians is Alice Burkhart.

(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

MR. REINER: Spousal abuse is something that happens, as the news has finally made us all too well aware. In Glendale, Arizona, there is New Beginnings, a transitional home for abused women and their children. It provides not only safety, shelter and educational opportunities for the mothers, but most importantly, it keeps families together while they prepare to make a new start in life.

Here's New Beginnings founder, Cindy Silverman.

(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: Kids One, Inc. in Santa Rosa, California promotes just one essential issue -- child safety. Galvanized by the Polly Klaas tragedy, which proved that unspeakable horror can happen anywhere, Kids One is teaching kids and parents never to take safety for granted. With the support of community organizations and businesses, Kids One educates and saves precious lives. Its founder is Elizabeth Ecke.

(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

MR. REINER: Twelve years ago, he was still an intern at Miami Hospital. Dr. Pedro Jose Greer, Jr. led teams of young doctors into the streets to make house calls to the homeless. Today, his Camillus health concern is one of the largest providers of medical care for the poor in Florida. He still makes his rounds, visiting his patients under the bridges and overpasses, in the abandoned buildings and decayed lots of Dade County. Here is Dr. Pedro Jose Greer, Jr.

(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: These are just four of the many examples that could be up here on this stage of people who are combining their professional expertise, their volunteer spirit to meet the needs of our families and our children who have health care requirements that are otherwise going to be unmet. And so, they should serve as a shining example to all of us to look for ways we can give every American child a healthy start. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

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PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you, Patti LaBelle, for giving us all a second wind. (Laughter.) I want to apologize to all of you for having to spend so much time tonight watching me walk up and down stairs. But, as you know, I need the practice. (Laughter.)

I want to say that this last award in some ways may be the most important, because we're recognizing young people who, themselves, are serving in an extraordinary way. And one of the elements of this summit is the proposition that every young person should serve, and that, in so doing, we hope to expand the definition of what it means to be a good citizen in this country so that when we ask young people in years to come, what does it really mean to be a good American, they'll say, well, you have to be in school or work, you have to obey the law, and you have to serve.

I'm joined now on stage by a young public servant, Jahi Davis, an AmeriCorps volunteer from North Philadelphia. (Applause.) Like a lot of high school students, this young man paid more attention to his social life than to his future. Then he nearly lost his life in a serious accident. He says now he wouldn't have finished high school without the guidance of a tutor who helped him keep his grades up while he was in the hospital.

When he recovered, he decided to do for others what had been done for him. He joined AmeriCorps in 1995, and since then, he has tutored children, started a mentoring program in his own neighborhood, and rehabilitated houses for low income families. He's planning to attend Temple University, where I know he'll continue to give back. Please welcome him up here with me. (Applause.)

When 21-year-old Na'Taki Osborne learned that Carver Hills, Georgia, a low-income African American community, was the most environmentally polluted area in Fulton County, she didn't just become concerned, she got involved. She got 200 community volunteers involved, too. And together, they spent hundreds of hours cleaning up Carver Hills, making it a safer and more beautiful place for the entire community to enjoy.

Thank you, Na'Taki Yatascha Osborne, for caring enough to change your community for the better.

(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Amber Lynn Coffman is only 15 years old, but she's been volunteering to help disadvantaged people since she was eight. Her mother taught her that even one

person can make a real difference, and for most of her still-young life, she has tried to be that one person and to encourage her friends and schoolmates to do the same.

Working together as a group called Happy Helpers, they make over 600 box lunches every week for the homeless and the hungry. Thank you, Amber Lynn, for your wonderful commitment to your community. (Applause.)

Across America, more and more businesses believe that good citizenship is also good business. More and more, they're encouraging their employees to give something back. Target Stores is a perfect example. Through the Family Matters Program, started by Points of Light, Target Stores is the first national company to involve its employees and their families in community service.

Last year, nearly 5,000 Target employees and their families volunteered. Working alongside their parents, young people learned firsthand about the importance and the joy of giving back. We thank Target Stores for helping so many young children start early on a lifetime of service.

With us tonight to represent Target is Julie Hennessy (phonetic).

(The award was presented.) (Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: As Oprah said earlier, the 16 award winners with us tonight represent volunteers all over our country who are committed to helping us all build a better and stronger future. In honoring their contributions, we celebrate the spirit of service that has sustained America in times of trouble and united us with common hopes and dreams.

At the dawn of a new century, let us all resolve to join hands to do it more. Remember what this summit is all about. These people were doing all this before we gathered. Ninety-three million Americans already volunteer. What we're saying is that in every community in America, more people must do it in a systematic way and everyone must do it if America is going to have the future it deserves and our children are going to all be like those whom we honor here tonight.

Thank you and God bless you all. (Applause.)

END

11:26 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

Internal Transcript

April 27, 1997

INTERVIEW OF THE PRESIDENT
BY KATIE COURIC, NBC TODAY SHOW

Marcus Foster Stadium
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1:50 P.M. EDT

Q Mr. President, since time is of the essence, in 30 seconds or less, what is the goal of the summit?

THE PRESIDENT: The summit has two goals. One is to mobilize millions more people in every community in the country to help children get a better start in life, with mentoring, health care, education, safe places and getting kids involved themselves in helping their neighbors. The second is a larger goal, and that is to change what Americans think of as good citizenship, to include citizen service; to get everybody in America to say, if I'm going to be a really good American citizen for the 21st century, I have to serve. Those are the two goals.

Q Mr. President, have you ever been involved in community service in a way that particularly touched you?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes, in many different ways. I remember when I was in college at Georgetown I worked in a community action program; I went into the inner city. And it made an impression on me I'll never forget about how difficult those people's lives were that I dealt with and how brave so many of them were. They got up every day, they went to work, they obeyed the law, and they were having a tough time.

And then when the city burned after Martin Luther King was killed, and big blocks burned, I worked for several days carrying supplies -- food, medicine, clothing -- to people who were living in the basements of churches and other things. And it gave me an appreciation for the struggles that people have that are often overlooked, particularly in the urban places.

I mean, when I was a little boy in Arkansas, half the people were below the poverty line, but families were more coherent, communities were more coherent, kids all thought they had a chance to make it. There are too many kids that don't think they have a chance to make it today, and that's what we're trying to turn around.

Q Mr. President, when it comes to this effort, I know there have been about 250 commitments by corporations and non-profit groups. Briefly, what do these commitments entail?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, many of them are committing more people from welfare to work. Some of them are committing to provide more health supplies for children in need of health care. Some of them are committing to do more mentoring, reading -- the whole range of things designed to fulfill our obligations to our children in a systematic way.

Q Is paid time for volunteering the most important thing a company can promise?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's an important thing. Giving employees -- if you're a big company and you can afford to

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do it, or if you're a medium-sized or small company, you can afford to do it -- giving people time off from work to volunteer is a good thing to do.

But I think there are other things that can be done. People can -- even in their free time, employees can organize themselves to help children, to work with kids, to reach out to them, to give -- study after study after study shows that kids that grow up in very different circumstances who make it, who do well in life, all have one thing in common. They've had a sustained relationship with a caring adult. And when you get right down to it, that's what we're trying to do. We're trying to organize people so that in every community we see all these kids as our children.

Q So time is really more important than writing a check.

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is. But for people who don't have the time, if they write a check and it helps other people to give time, that's important. For example, our AmeriCorps kids work full-time, but they mobilize, each of them, about a dozen other volunteers. Now we're working with a group of churches who want to support children to work full-time in their communities, so that if a young college student, for example, will take a year off from college and the people in the church can only afford to give money, they're still, in effect, giving time because they're helping to support a young person who is working full-time. And everyone should do something as much as he or she can.

Q I know AmeriCorps is one of your favorite projects within your administration. But these students are given a small stipend and student loans for committing time to volunteer --

THE PRESIDENT: They get money -- sort of like the G.I. Bill -- they accumulate, for every year they work they get about \$4,700 to go to college on.

Q Is this quid pro quo contrary at all to the spirit of volunteerism that you're trying to instill here?

THE PRESIDENT: Not to me because I also think we have a vested national interest in seeing more of our young people going to college. And if you talk to a lot of these young AmeriCorps people, the thing I like about it is they're from all over. I mean, some of them are young people from upper incomes who don't need the money. But an awful lot of them are people from very poor backgrounds who even went back and finished high school just in the hope they could go to college. But the act of serving full-time has changed their lives forever and done a lot of good.

Q A lot of people may be inspired by this summit, but facing reality, they're two career households, both parents working, they barely feel like they have enough time to spend with their own kids. What would you say to them in terms of carving out time to actually do community service?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would encourage particularly if you've got two parents working and they have their own children, I think they ought to try to find ways to do it with their kids, so it's time with their family they might spend anyway. For example, a two-parent household with a child might take some time on the weekend with their own children and then ask one of the children's classmates who comes from a more difficult background who could use that kind of role model in family, in seeing the father, seeing the mother working with the kids, to be a part of their lives a little bit on the weekend. They could do that.

Q Take them to the zoo and even alternate with other families.

THE PRESIDENT: Take them to the zoo, read books to them, make them feel like they're a part of something that works, that's good.

Q Seventy-four percent of the respondents in a recent poll think young Americans without education or job prospects is the greatest threat facing the country. If that's the case, if that many people think this is such a serious problem, shouldn't government be increasing its role, rather than decreasing it?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes --

Q Many people think that your signing the welfare bill only exacerbated the situation of poor kids at risk.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I disagree with that. For one thing, these kids need education. My balanced budget has the biggest increase in education funding since President Johnson was here, and would make the first two years of college as universal as high school is today. That's what the kids need. It adds five million more children to the ranks of those with health insurance, and the welfare reform bill puts \$4 billion more into child care.

Now, it's not going to hurt the kids if we move the parents from welfare to work. One of the things that we are challenging employers to do in service is to increase their employment by hiring people from welfare to work, and government, again, is giving them more tax incentives to do that. So government is doing more.

But, Katie, a lot of these problems these children have are human problems. There one-on-one problems. They can only be dealt with by people who deal with them one on one. Now, we can increase our investment in education, but we've reduced the size of the government bureaucracy. And what has to happen is we have to have community-based organizations of citizens in all these communities to reach these kids one on one. The government -- more government? Yes, where appropriate. Is it enough? No.

Q Many -- as you know, Mr. President, many of these volunteer agencies suffer from bad management, untrained volunteers and a lack of accountability, and the effect of their efforts are largely unmeasured. So how can you -- are you convinced that volunteers can solve the serious problem of millions of kids at risk? It doesn't seem as if they're really equipped to do so.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think -- what I think will happen is, if we have the right sort of follow-up in this conference -- and General Powell has got this organization to do follow-up -- and we work with him, that we'll have in every community really competent, able people committed to this process. So if there's a group of volunteers, they will be evaluated. And if they have shortcomings they'll be trained to do it.

But this is not rocket science. We can train people to do it. If you have energetic people of goodwill, we can train them to do it. And that's the important thing.

One of the commitments I made here was that the Department of Defense would take responsibility for mentoring, tutoring and teaching a million children between now and the year 2000, because we know from the training they do for young recruits that they know how to do it. We're prepared to work in communities all over the country to help train other groups, but

the answer there is to train and organize and, in effect, professionalize every community's efforts -- not to say you don't need them.

No matter how much government we have, if we had more government programs we would still need people to work with them. The same thing is true with people on welfare. Whatever the size of the welfare check, the main thing we need now is for people who never had a job before, never done a resume, never even had to show up on time every day, they need people to work with them in very human ways to move them from a dependency culture to an independence culture.

Q Do you hope this emphasis on community service will be part of your legacy?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, sure, because I really -- I believe in it, I campaigned on it in 1992. I'm now trying to get college students all over America to be part of a million-person army to teach every 8-year-old to read independently. I believe that. I believe in the combination of government doing its job and citizens doing their job, and that's how the country works best.

Q What's your reaction, Mr. President, to critics who say you're not reaching high enough; you're going for politically palatable measures that are easy to swallow in your second term? You've heard the criticism.

THE PRESIDENT: I have, but I don't think it's accurate. Let's just look at the first 100 days. I proposed a budget that would balance the budget for the first time since 1969, that would have the biggest increase in education funding in a generation and make the first two years of college universal, that would give health care coverage to five million kids and clean up the 500 worst toxic waste dumps in the country.

I got a telecommunications agreement that will create hundreds of thousands of high-wage jobs for America by getting the world, in effect, involved in our technology. We just made an agreement in Helsinki to reduce our nuclear arms to 80 percent from their Cold War high. We just had a Chemical Weapons Convention that I think is historic in its importance. We have now got 20 percent of the country, already just in the first 100 days, 20 percent of the school children in the country committed to take the first ever test measuring national standards for reading and math by 1999. And that's in the first 100 days.

I don't think that's insignificant. If we have -- if we leave with genuine national standards in education for the first time in over 200 years, if we have all the children in this country insured, and if we have -- if we make our welfare to work totals, we put another million people from welfare to work and prove welfare reform does work, I think those are historic and profoundly important.

Q Do you want to answer one more question? They're telling me --

THE PRESIDENT: Sure, one more.

Q All right. Can I ask you about tobacco quickly, President Clinton? Some people are saying the court decision in North Carolina, saying the FDA could consider tobacco a drug and regulate it, is a mixed blessing because it also said that advertising could not be controlled in a way you were seeking.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first, let me say, I'm in the camp, along with David Kessler who worked with me to issue those regulations, that believes that this decision is a huge victory for us. In a difficult environment, the court ruled that the Federal Food and Drug Administration could regulate tobacco.

That means we can protect our children. I believe access to tobacco by children equals addiction to tobacco by children. So I'm very happy.

You know, we started this battle and people told me it was crazy, it didn't make any sense, it would just hurt us all, it was an awful idea. And it's an enormous validation.

Now, the court did say, that while the FDA could regulate tobacco, it couldn't regulate the advertising of tobacco. But it didn't say that we were violating the 1st Amendment; it simply said that the statute as written didn't permit advertising be regulated. Now, that gives us two options: number one, we can appeal that --

Q Which you're doing.

THE PRESIDENT: We're going to appeal it. We've got a good chance to win. And number two, if we can't do it by advertising we can figure out some other way to do it. And so, in that sense, if I were in the tobacco companies' shoes, I'd almost be regretful of that because, actually, anything else that could be done by the FDA would be, in effect, more extreme from their point of view.

So I'm very happy with the decision. I wish we'd gotten everything, but we're going to appeal and we're going to keep fighting to protect the kids.

Q That's good. They're telling me -- they're going to kill me if I keep asking you questions.

THE PRESIDENT: You did well. We got a lot of questions, didn't we -- boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom.

END

2:06 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

Internal Transcript

April 27, 1997

INTERVIEW OF THE PRESIDENT

BY

GOOD MORNING AMERICA

Marcus Foster Stadium
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

2:14 P.M. EDT

Q Mr. President, in 1995, 93 million Americans volunteered to do something, and volunteered 20 billion hours. Our record is pretty good. So why do we need something like this?

THE PRESIDENT: Because we need more and we need a different sort of focus. This conference is attempting to do two things, this Summit on Service. First, to focus us on what is our biggest common problem, which is that even though we've had record numbers of new jobs, crime rates are declining, the welfare rolls are declining, this country is in great shape -- a significant number of our young people are not in good shape.

And so we want more people in every community to volunteer to mentor kids, to help them develop skills, to make sure they have the health care they need, to make sure they're in safe places, and to get children themselves involved in community activities and service. And in a larger sense, what we're trying to do is to redefine the concept of citizenship so that we don't say, 93 million of us volunteer, that's good; we should say all of us do something for our fellow men and women, boys and girls in our community.

There was a survey a couple of weeks ago which was published which said that over 90 percent of our young people would volunteer to help each other if they were simply asked, right across racial and ethnic lines. And we know that the government should do some more things, too. I've proposed a big increase in education, making the first two years of college as universal as high school; having national standards for the first time and in 1999 an examination to see whether our kids are meeting those standards; adding millions of children to the ranks of those who are insured; continuing to work to make our streets safer.

But if we do all that, a lot of these kids have problems that are personal and human and have to be dealt with one on one. So, yes, we're a great volunteering country, but we can do more, more of us can do it, and we have to focus on the children.

Q Volunteerism suggests something in people's minds. And yet, today, you talked about a million people from the Defense Department as mentors and a million from DOT as mentors, reading tutors to tutor another million people. The cost of that, in time, for Defense Department people, DOT people, the cost of training the reading tutors -- that's estimated at \$2.7 billion by itself. The cost of that is enormous. That's almost an anathema to volunteerism.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but the benefits far outweigh the costs. And keep in mind, a lot this time will be -- a lot of this is things that people will do on their own time, not just on the government's time, but on their own time. In the case of the

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Department of Transportation, a lot of them are working with private contractors, like highway contractors, people who repair airports, people who do other things; they will do a lot of that work.

In the case of the reading tutors, we're going to use 11,000 of our AmeriCorps volunteers to try to mobilize 35,000 others, then we'll go out and get a million more. College presidents, for example, are giving us young people who are going to do work study anyway, to do this.

I prefer to call it service and to say there are all kinds of services. Volunteers can do service, full-time people like AmeriCorps people can do service. If an employer hires an extra employee who is moving from welfare to work so they can help their own kids, that's service. That's what I want Americans to think about -- that service is a part of citizenship.

Q Would we be talking about this with such urgency if there weren't cutbacks in government social programs to the extent that this is?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think we would. Let me just say this -- and I'm glad you asked me the question, because I think there is a common assumption that there is somehow a connection between this summit and the passage of the welfare reform bill; that that somehow symbolizes --

Q Well, I was going to get to that, too --

THE PRESIDENT: -- a cutback in social programs. I disagree with that. Let me say again: Look at my balanced budget. It has the biggest increase in education funding in a generation; it adds 5 million kids to the ranks of those with health insurance. In the case of welfare we're putting \$4 billion more into child care. My plan would provide \$3 billion more to pay people -- to help cities hire people from welfare to work, in tax incentives to help businesses hire people from welfare to work.

Government in this case is doing more. What we know is that the children who are growing up in dysfunctional, high-crime areas or who don't have strong family situations or whose parents need to learn more about good parenting, that those problems cannot be addressed by government programs, that all these things that I am proposing will really help, but these kids still need one-on-one involvement with caring adults and with other children who have more productive lives that they can become a part of. We know that.

Q One of the things you're asking is for corporations to get involved in this, not only in providing material, but providing manpower to do the kinds of mentoring you're talking about. Corporations in the last eight years, when you look at pre-tax profits, cut their charitable donations in half. This is a time when corporations more and more are worried about the bottom line on their balance sheet. Are they going to do it? What's in it for them?

THE PRESIDENT: I'll tell you what's in it for them. What's in it for them is a stronger America, more taxpayers down the line and fewer people eating up tax dollars; lower crime rates; healthier citizens; people with better educations who, themselves, have higher incomes and buy the products and services that corporations put out. People who are better educated and therefore can be their entry-level employees.

You can't have healthy corporations in an unhealthy environment. And if you -- let's look at a strong American corporation today with a high growth rate. There are only two places that those corporations can expand their markets. They

can expand their markets overseas to places that are growing, or they can expand their markets by having more Americans become more productive and able to buy their products and services.

And I think the most efficient thing for us to do as a country -- just cold-blooded efficiency -- selfishness, enlightened selfishness -- is to stop letting so many kids get away from us and wind up in jail and on drugs and the victims of violence and save a higher percentage of them.

Q But if they bought that, would their charitable contributions be going down at the rate that they have and when these cameras go away, do you think they'll be there?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, I think a lot of them --

Q Do you honestly think they'll be there?

THE PRESIDENT: I do. I do think they'll be there -- let me just say this. I think they'll be there if we are there on a consistent basis. One of the reasons that I was excited about being a part and a sponsor of this summit is that General Powell was committed -- and I think this comes out of his military training -- he was committed to do this only if we had a follow-up organization that was properly funded, that could systematically continue to go after the business community to invest not only money, but the time and talents of their people.

So I think the second thing is, we will be able to show, more than the business community has been able to show in the past -- we've been able to show the business community in the past, what works and what doesn't. So they'll know that when they make a charitable contribution, they don't just get a tax deduction, they know they're going to get something for their money.

And finally, let me say, often time is more important than money. If these corporate executives and these wage-earners and the salary earners and the people that work up and down the line, or the people that work in the little businesses, you know, if they start bringing in kids on the weekend, if they start reading to little kids, if they start going into the inner cities and helping to organize baseball and soccer leagues, those kinds of things will change the face of our country in a profound way.

Q Do you favor mandatory service for young people in some way -- volunteerism?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe it's a good thing. But the best way to do it is in the schools. That is, I don't think we ought to -- we can't pass a law and require it full-time because we don't have enough money to support that, even though -- for example, in AmeriCorps, there are about 25,000 young people today. Now, that's a lot. By the year 2000, we'll have more people who served in AmeriCorps in eight years than served in the whole history of the Peace Corps, and more and more young people want to do it.

But what I think ought to be done is, I think -- let me just give you an example. David Hornbeck, who is the superintendent here in Philadelphia is about to put in a requirement in the Philadelphia school systems that all 4th or 5th graders have to do some community service as a condition of going on to middle school, and 8th graders have to do some as a condition of going on to high school.

Ten years ago -- ten years ago, David Hornbeck and I and Tom Kean, the former Republican Governor of New Jersey, were on a commission where we recommended this for 8th graders in America. And do I think it's a good thing? I think it's a great idea.

Q And there are many school systems that make it a requirement for graduation from high school as well.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and I think that's a good thing.

Q The argument then gets raised, if it's mandatory volunteerism, that's an oxymoron. Volunteerism, by its nature, is not mandatory.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. Well, I have two responses to that. Number one, I think if it were mandatory on the schools to offer it in a systematic and meaningful way, just to offer it, over 90 percent of the young people would do it anyway. First of all, it would quickly become the thing to do; secondly, kids are basically idealistic and they want to know that they matter, and a lot of the ways they know they matter are when they can help other people.

So I think maybe we ought to focus on mandating the schools to offer it. If they offered it, most kids would do it. The second thing is, where it is mandatory for young people, that's part of raising young people. If you make it mandatory for a 4th grader or an 8th grader and it's a part of their growing up, then it's something they experience and they know; then, when they're adults, of course it's not mandatory, but they're far more likely to keep doing it. That's part of an educational process. You know, we require children to do all kinds of things we don't require adults to do, because we think that when they learn good habits and good values, it strengthens their characters and they do better later in life.

Q Final question: In 1961 I remember hearing Mort Saul do a monologue in which he said, after hearing John Kennedy say, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," the whole premise of the monologue was, he traveled around the country trying to find out from President Kennedy what in the world it was he was supposed to do.

He finally runs into Kennedy, and Kennedy says, well, just keep doing what you're doing. Well, what does some guy who sees all of this going on in Philadelphia who is in Topeka, Kansas or in someplace in Texas, what does he do? What would you have him do?

THE PRESIDENT: I would have him, first of all, say what is the condition of the kids in my community, what are the problems here, where are the kids that need help, what do they need? Do they need a mentor for kids who grew up in troubled homes in violent neighborhoods? Do they need parents to work on organizing safe streets organizations? It works. In Boston, they haven't had a kid killed in a year and a half. The only big city in America where that's true, because citizens work with the police officers and the probation officers to do it.

Do they need greater health care? Do we need to figure out a way to get these kids to the health clinics on the weekends or get health professionals into the schools? What is it that they need? And then, I want to go volunteer whatever I can to fill that need.

Every adult can at least offer to be a mentor through a Big Brother or Big Sister program or some other program there. Everybody can offer to help -- to get very little training if you've got good, basic education -- and learn to teach a child to read, to get reading skills up, which is so important. That's what I would do. I would say, I'm going to make it my business to find out what the people in my community need.

Q Mr. President, thank you. Good to talk to you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks.

END

2:25 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

For Immediate Release

April 27, 1997

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT CLINTON,
PRESIDENT CARTER, PRESIDENT BUSH,
GENERAL COLIN POWELL, AND THE VICE PRESIDENT

Marcus Foster Stadium
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

11:05 A.M. EDT

GENERAL POWELL: Distinguished guests on the stand with me, ladies and gentlemen, I just want to say to you, it's good to have an army again. I love it! (Applause.)

And it's going to be a great army. Just look around at the uniforms of orange and blue and yellow. Look at us as Americans, white and black, all coming together here in Philadelphia, the birthplace of this great nation. (Applause.) We're coming together because we care. We're coming together because we're a compassionate people. We are coming together because we can look out across America and see problems that we can do something about.

We see young people in need, young people who are wondering, is there an American Dream for me; can I achieve my dream; can I achieve my ambition; will people help me; will somebody reach and lift me up? I wonder about that. And the answer we're going to give them is, yes, America cares. Each and every one of us cares. (Applause.)

This is not the time to say, are you substituting for government? This is not the time to ask, is there more that government should be doing or less that government should be doing? This is a time for each and every one of us to look into our own heart, to look into our own community, find someone who is in need, find someone who is wanting, find someone who is looking up to us, and for each and every one of us to reach down, to reach back, to reach across, to lift up a fellow American and put him on the road to success in this wonder country of ours. We can do it. (Applause.)

For those who say, how far can you get, the answer is, not sure yet. There are 15 million young Americans in need, and we should not be satisfied until we have touched the life of every one of those 15 million American youngsters. (Applause.)

How can we fail if we get this kind of an outpouring in Philadelphia -- an outpouring that will be repeated in cities and towns across this nation? This has to be a crusade, a campaign, an alliance that goes on for months and years into the future. How can we fail when we have the kind of commitment we see from our Presidents and our political leaders and our public spirited leaders and all the leaders in every institution of America? How can we fail when we live in a country as great as ours? How can we fail if we are a people as great as we are? We are Americans. We can make it happen. We will make it happen. We must make it happen. (Applause.)

And now, ladies and gentlemen, it is my great pleasure to introduce someone who has been supportive of this effort from the very, very beginning and whose counsel I have used to great value over the last several weeks, and that is our

MORE

distinguished Vice President of the United States -- Vice President Al Gore. (Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Thank you. Thank you very much. Hello, Philadelphia! (Applause.) Are you ready for service? (Applause.) Well, thank you.

And, General Powell, I'm going to have the privilege of introducing you tomorrow, but I want to take this opportunity right here and now, at the beginning of this tremendous weekend that kicks off a dramatic national effort -- if I can be so presumptuous, I'd like to speak for the entire United States of America in saying to General Colin Powell, thank you for leading this effort on the ground, being a point man. We appreciate it. (Applause.)

Tipper and I are so honored to be here with President and Mrs. Clinton. And I'm going to say just a word about them in just a moment. We're honored to be here with President Bush, a former Commander-in-Chief and current paratrooper -- (applause) -- and Mrs. Bush. And we want to thank the two of you for your life long commitment to volunteerism and service and for your leadership on this occasion.

And you know, President and Mrs. Carter were introduced early as America's first volunteer couple. They have been out there with hammers and saws, and we appreciate your leadership here. (Applause.)

And to Alma Powell, to Governor Ridge and Mayor Rendell and Judge Midge Rendell, all the distinguished members of the congressional delegation, Senator Specter and Congressman Borski and Fattah and Foglietta, and Secretary Cisneros and, you know, President Ford is going to be here a little bit later. And I want to acknowledge the daughter of former President Johnson, Linda Johnson Robb, who is also here, and all of the others who have played a part in this event. (Applause.)

I'm not quite sure how I feel about being surrounded by all of this star power. It reminds me a little of when championship sports teams visit the White House, like the Bulls did a couple of weeks ago. Maybe the next team will be the Philadelphia Flyers. You can't tell. (Applause.)

But when events like that happen at the White House, they're really great, but not necessarily for me, because people go crazy and they're so excited, I just get brushed aside, pushed to the back of the room and, if I'm lucky, somebody will see me alone in the corner and say, "Excuse me, Al, can you take a picture of me and Michael Jordan?" (Laughter.) And I answer, "Of course, Mr. President." (Laughter.)

Tomorrow is a wonderful day, the start of something big. Thank all of you for being here to kick off and participate in this truly historic summit. I've been listening, as maybe some of you have, to the overwhelming chorus of approval from Americans that come from every part of our country to say now is the time. Let's do it. Let's put all the divisions behind us. Let's all pitch in -- black, white, brown, yellow, red, Democrat, Republican -- every ideological combination. (Applause.) This is a good thing.

You'll hear a few voices, both on the right and on the left, saying they don't like this or they don't like that. Well, all of the other debates ought to be put to one side because this means we're coming together as a nation to help those who need help. Regardless of what the government does. We're going to pitch in as individual Americans and do what we can. Right? (Applause.)

I want to say that President and Mrs. Clinton and Tipper and I have had occasion -- many occasions during the last

four years to put on work clothes and rebuild a church, or paint houses, or build houses with President and Mrs. Carter, and volunteerism is good for the soul and good for this country. President Clinton has tried to embody that spirit in the AmeriCorps program, in the America Reads program -- (applause) -- and there are all different kinds of volunteerism and they all do a lot of good if they're organized correctly.

This kickoff is the time when all of it is brought together. Let's make sure that this is not just a volunteerism summit, but the beginning of a volunteerism movement that continues from Philadelphia all across the United States of America. Let's do it! (Applause.)

GENERAL POWELL: And now, ladies and gentlemen, it's my great pleasure to introduce President Jimmy Carter. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT CARTER: Thank you. (Applause.) No one can come to Philadelphia, the birthplace of freedom and equality in this nation, without thinking about the last more than 200 years of evolution of our great country. We have people here from every nation on Earth, totally different. It's not a melting pot, it's kind of like a mosaic with different people looking different ways, but forming a beautiful picture. But the thing that is constant for all of us is twofold. One is a commitment to freedom, and the other one is a commitment to equality.

I don't think there's much doubt that in this country we do have freedom. But I don't think there's much doubt that in this country we do not yet have equality. (Applause.) In many ways, we have two Americas. We have two Philadelphias. We have two Atlantas. We have two Los Angeleses. One of them is a rich nation with a decent home in which to live, with fairly good health care and education and a job opportunity, and a belief that the police are on our side and that the judicial system is fair, and that if we make a decision, it will make a difference at least in our own lives. Those are the rich people. But we have a lot of neighbors who don't have any of those things.

This summit is designed to correct that problem in our great country. (Applause.) What can we do about it? You tell me -- what can we do about it? Volunteer, right? What can we do about it? Volunteer. If we want to have a lot of adventure in life, we can --

AUDIENCE: Volunteer.

PRESIDENT CARTER: -- volunteer. If we want to do something that's unpredictable, we can --

AUDIENCE: Volunteer.

PRESIDENT CARTER: -- volunteer. If we want to make new friends, we can --

AUDIENCE: Volunteer.

PRESIDENT CARTER: -- volunteer. If we want to have a gratifying experience, we can --

AUDIENCE: Volunteer.

PRESIDENT CARTER: -- volunteer. If you want to shed a few tears of joy and happiness, we can --

AUDIENCE: Volunteer.

PRESIDENT CARTER: -- volunteer. That's what we're here for. Let's do it. (Applause.)

GENERAL POWELL: And now, ladies and gentlemen, it's my great pleasure to introduce my fellow paratrooper, President George Bush. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you, Colin. Thank you all very much. President Clinton and Mrs. Clinton, and Mr. Vice President, and President Carter, and, of course, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs who's now setting such a great example, Colin Powell -- what a joy it is to be working with him again.

Barbara are thrilled to be here, really. And today, we're just Americans -- not Republican, not Democrat; not Jew or Gentile; not rich or poor; not black or white. Today, we are Americans united by a common commitment to our country and to our children -- most of all to the children. (Applause.) And we're here because we want to give something back -- give something back to this nation which has given us our freedom, and the generation that is our future.

And so we've come together in Philadelphia to invite our fellow citizens across this country to get involved in making your community, the whole country a better place to live.

And, of course, this morning I'm privileged to share this stage with a prestigious group of leaders, coming from the world of politics and religion and the military. But looking out here today, I see another group of leaders who are more important when it comes to volunteering and contributing in the community. And that is thousands of citizens who care. (Applause.)

If there's one message -- if there's one message for the people of this summit, I hope it's that you don't have to be a President to be a leader, and you don't have to be a First Lady to touch the life of someone else. Barbara likes to say, what happens in your house is more important than what happens in the White House. And she is absolutely right. (Applause.)

And, you know, when you look at problems we face as a nation, it would be easy to get discouraged. Too many kids are going to be hungry at night, can't read or don't have someone who cares for them. But when you realize that there isn't a problem we face in America that isn't being solved by somebody, someplace, then this is our call to action.

And such is the spirit of Philadelphia, epitomized by your enthusiastic Mayor. And today and tomorrow and Tuesday and beyond, there's something for each of us to do. And Barbara and I look forward to rolling up our sleeves and joining each of you in doing it -- in volunteering. Thank you all very, very much. (Applause.)

GENERAL POWELL: Thank you very much, President Bush.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we put this summit together, we had the full support, encouragement, championship of our next speaker -- a man who has devoted his life to service and has been very, very aggressive in putting the mark of national service back on our national agenda. And he and his wife have a lifelong record of service to youth issues. It is now my great pleasure to present to you our President, President William Jefferson Clinton. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you very much. Good morning!

AUDIENCE: Good morning!

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Are you ready to go to work?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Are you warmed up?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Have you heard all the speeches you want to hear? (Applause.)

I want to just say -- let me say, first of all, how grateful I am to be here with all this people who have made this possible and with all of you. I thank the people of Philadelphia for being so good to me since 1992 and for being my friends and for giving me a chance to work with you to bring Philadelphia back. Thank you so much. (Applause.) I thank all your officials. I thank your wonderful Mayor.

General Powell told me when he retired from the United States Army as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the one thing he wanted to do more than anything else was to find a way to give every child in this country a chance at a good future, and I thank him for doing that. (Applause.)

I thank Colin and Alma. I thank George and Barbara Bush for their examples -- Mrs. Bush with her literacy program; President Bush for A Thousand Points of Light. (Applause.) I thank President and Mrs. Carter for caring about the children of this country, for the work they've done with Habitat for Humanity and for -- (applause) -- for going all over the world to rid the children of the world of dread diseases, to give them food to eat and a decent, humane place to grow up in. I thank all of you.

But let's face it. I want everybody to face it. Why are we here? We know that a lot of us would be doing a lot of this anyway. There are a lot of wonderful volunteers in America. Here's why we're here. This country has produced a lot of jobs in the last four years. The crime rate is going down, the welfare rolls are going down. But we're still losing too many kids to crime, to drugs, to not having a decent income in their home and to not having a bright future. And we're here because we don't think we have to put up with it, and we believe together we can change it. Isn't that right? (Applause.)

I'm here because I want the young people out here to grow up in an America that is even greater than the America I grew up in. That is the eternal dream and promise, and every one of you deserves that. I'm here because, frankly, I believe that as children of God, we can never fulfill our own ambitions until we help our brothers and sisters to fulfill theirs. (Applause.) our brothers and sisters to fulfill theirs. (Applause.)

I'm here because I want to redefine the meaning of citizenship in America. I want the children here, starting next week, and all over America -- if you're asked in school, what does it mean to be a good citizen, I want the answer to be, well, to be a good citizen, you have to obey the law, you've got to go to work or be in school, you've got to pay your taxes and, oh, yes, you have to serve in your community to help make it a better place. (Applause.)

And, General Powell, since we're going to keep this going and we all have to make an account of ourselves, I'll go first. Here's my commitment to you and your project.

In the next four years, the Department of Defense will mentor, tutor and teach one million children. (Applause.) In the next four years, the Department of Transportation and the private businesses who work with them will do that for one million more. (Applause.) We will adopt a total of 2,000 schools in the federal agencies of this country. (Applause.) We will find one million reading tutors in the America Reads program, to make sure every child can read independently by the

3rd grade. (Applause.) And our AmeriCorps volunteers will go across this country to recruit at least a dozen more volunteers for every one of them, to make sure that all of the items on your agenda succeed. That is our commitment. (Applause.)

Are you ready to keep your commitment?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

PRESIDENT CLINTON: After today is over, do you promise to keep working tomorrow?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

PRESIDENT CLINTON: And next year?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

PRESIDENT CLINTON: And the year after that?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Until the job is done?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I promise. Say it!

AUDIENCE: I promise!

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Let's go to work. God bless you. (Applause.)

GENERAL POWELL: All right. The speeches are over. We've had a great morning, but now it's time to get to work. Remember what you've heard here today. Let's go out and take care of our fellow citizens. Let's be volunteers for a better America. Let's be prepared to serve. Let what's happening here today spread across the country to every city, to every town.

Are you ready to go, Philadelphia?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

GENERAL POWELL: Well, we're going to get it on! And now I would ask Rabbi Fuchs to come forward and give us a benediction so that we can get on with our work.

END

11:37 A.M. EDT

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The Presidents' Summit for America's

Future

