



and for your children.

That's not the way it needs to be.

We don't have to continue to read the statistics week after week, about the number of Americans who are unemployed, the number of Americans who are working but whose jobs, even after working forty hours a week, cannot lift them out of poverty.

We do not have to live with the level of violence in this society, where every three hours an American child is murdered on our streets. We do not have to continue to deny health care opportunities to our youngest and our oldest citizens.

We do not need to worry whether our children will have the kinds of educational opportunities they need to be competitive. And we do not have to continue to step around and over the homeless people in the streets of America for another year.

My husband, Bill Clinton and Al Gore have a very different vision of America than the one we're confronted with now. Their vision is a positive vision, a hopeful vision. It is one where people are brought together across racial and ethnic lines, where no longer are the differences among us exploited for short-term political gain, but rather serve as a basis for a new strength in this country where every person's God-given potential can be realized and where all of us together can build the kind of future we can be proud of again.

This vision asks something of all of us. It says, "Yes, we need a new economic policy." We must, once and for all, put an end to this experiment that has been tried for 12 years, this trickle-down economics, which has failed. For 12 years, the reigning philosophy in Washington has been to keep taxes on the richest of Americans as low as possible and then somehow expect us to be able to be competitive and create jobs and income for all Americans.

Well, the results are in and they're painful to see. But they shouldn't be surprising. In 1980, American workers had the highest wages in the world. Today, we are thirteenth and falling. We now have the biggest gap in income disparity between the richest and the poorest of Americans that we ever had in our recorded history, and nearly two-thirds, of all Americans are working harder for less income than they made in 1980. A lot of you, a lot of your parents, and a lot of your grandparents are in that category.

We need to try a different approach. And what my husband has proposed is an approach that invests in American jobs, products and services. We are the only country that actually gives tax breaks to people who want to move jobs out of Illinois overseas. It is time that we do away with that kind of tax system and instead

substitute incentives and investments to grow this economy the old-fashioned way. Let people invest in jobs here, new plants and equipment, new research and development.

You'll hear a lot in this campaign with people trading all kinds of charges back-and-forth. One of those is that my husband and Al Gore have proposed much deeper cuts in the defense budget. That's not true. There's about a 5% disparity in the decreases that my husband and Al think can happen in the next four years and what the current administration is proposing. But there is a very big difference in what they would do.

Bill Clinton and Al Gore would take every dollar by which we decrease defense, and transfer that into the civilian economy where we'll make investments in new transportation and communications and other kinds of technology.

When Al Gore came back from the Earth Summit he said to Bill and me that it just made him sick to be down in Rio and to watch representatives of other countries who know where a lot of new jobs are going to come from -- they're going to come from environmental technology -- out there selling all kinds of new products to other countries that will put their people to work, while our government is standing back, dragging its feet, refusing to accept reality. Well, that is not the kind of government we will have after January of next year.

Here at this great university, wouldn't it be nice to have a real education President for a change? And in the vision of America that my husband has, what we'll have is an education President who believes that America's students can learn as much and perform as well as students anywhere in the world, no matter who their parents are or what their family backgrounds are. American students can and will perform well in school if they're expected to learn and given the challenge to do so.

And although most of the learning has to happen in the homes and schools of America, there are at least a couple of things a real education President can do. First, fully fund Head Start so that every youngster gets an fair chance to begin school ready to learn. Second, take the national education goals, of which my husband was the primary drafter during the summit between the governors and the President, that were promptly put on the back shelf somewhere, and take them off the shelf and look at them. Those goals set forth the kind of objectives we should be trying to reach in this country. One of them is that American students will be first in the world in math and science by the year 2000.

Now is that going to be easy? Of course it's not going to be easy. It's going to be very difficult if we are not prepared to do it. But let's set a goal for ourselves. I can remember as a young

student having a Republican President named Eisenhower who, when Sputnik went up, said to us, "We're going to do better in math and science education," and then started the Eisenhower Grant Program to improve math and science teaching. I remember a Democratic President named John Kennedy who said, "We're going to put a person on the moon and we expect young people to be part of that great adventure." Bill and I don't have a clue what George Bush wants our twelve-year-old daughter to learn, but I want all of the children in America to have a President who will tell them that learning is their job.

There are two other things a real education President named Bill Clinton will do. First, only 30% of the young people of this country get a college degree. Those of you who are here at this university should be grateful and very aware of that. Seventy percent do not, and what happens to them? We don't give them the kind of help that they deserve. But what my husband wants to do is give any young person who graduates from high school and wants a good job instead of a dead-end job a two-year apprenticeship program to learn the kind of skills and abilities that will enable them to be competitive in our society. Isn't it time that we reverse the policies of the Reagan-Bush years which made it increasingly difficult for young people from middle-income and working families to afford to go to college? Let's make college a real investment for the country.

What my husband proposes is to scrap the existing student loan and grant program that is out there confusing people and making it impossible for us to know what the requirements are, and substitute it with a national service trust fund out of which anybody can borrow the money to go to college, but they have to pay it back. This new vision of America includes responsibility from citizens, and it will have to be paid back in one of two ways: either as a percentage of your income at income tax time so there's no more opportunity for defaults -- you pay the money back; or, with two years of national service back here at home.

Think of what we could do in this country if those of you who got your college educations were willing to come back to this part of Illinois or wherever you're from and serve two years as a police officer, as a teacher, as a child care worker, to build housing for the homeless, to help solve the problems of America. It's not only a good investment in your future, it's an investment in America, and it's the kind of idea that will get this country moving in the right direction.

There are so many issues that have been talked about by my husband and Senator Gore, and they've actually put out a book that's available at newsstands. It's called Putting People First. It is an outline of their program. It is a book which sets forth what their policy proposals are. You do not have to read their

lips; read this book if you want to know what they will do.

This country can't be a world leader -- it can't set the standard for democratization, for free-market economies, for human rights, for the kinds of issues that we have always stood for if we are not strong at home. We never defeated the former Soviet Union on any field of battle; they fell from within. And we are now incarcerating a larger percentage of our people than every nation. According to the latest figures out of Washington, we now have one of every five children living in poverty.

We have a lot of problems. But, you know, this country has had tougher times in the past. Other generations have had to rise to their challenges. Abraham Lincoln, out of this state, had to keep a nation together. Franklin Roosevelt, from his wheelchair, had to make sure that we were not afraid, that we were willing to take on the challenges of a depression and a world war.

It is time now for all of us to do our part to make sure that this country is what it should be. We have this challenge in front of us. We need to do away with the politics of denial and diversion and neglect that have dominated our political scene for too long, and instead substitute for it a sense of hope, a sense of progress, a sense of togetherness, a sense of community, investing in our people by putting them first, and making sure that this vision of America that we have is translated into reality.

Making speeches doesn't make that happen. Holding posters doesn't make that happen. What makes that happen is participation in this election on November 3. And for many, many people, the level of cynicism and disbelief is so great that the idea of even voting is more of a commitment than they are willing to make. But you know what? There are people all over this world, in the former countries of Eastern Europe that are free, or in the republics of the former Soviet Union, or in Central or South America, or in Asia, who have literally died for a right which we turn our backs on every single year.

Just as in the former Soviet Union, when we're challenged nobody can beat us except ourselves. Nobody can turn back the tide of progress except those of us who don't care to be involved in making it happen. In the late 1960s, I was one of those people who worked hard and believed that if we amended our Constitution so that 18 year-olds, and 19 year-olds, and 20 year-olds could vote, it would make a difference. I'm sorry to say that it hasn't, because 18 to 24 year-olds are among the fewest voters in our population. But when you think about it, every election means more to young people than it does to those of us who are on the other side of the half of our life.

What we have to try to do, what my husband and Al are trying

to do, is to once again light some hope, some belief to quell the fires of despair, hopelessness and cynicism that are eating away at the vitality of this nation. When people are set against people to create an electoral majority so that we look with fear at each other instead of looking at our leadership, the folks in power stay there. And we blame one another for our problems. We step over homeless people. We add another deadbolt on our door. We worry about how we're going to get a job in a losing market instead of a growing one. That's not by accident.

What we need to do together is to turn our faces to Washington and say, "This country deserves, indeed demands, leadership as good as we are." If each of us is, at the very least, willing to register and then vote, it will send a signal. It will once again keep faith with those who have come before. The registration deadline in Illinois is October 5. Those of you who are from other places and don't intend to register here, find out what your deadlines are and find out how you get an absentee ballot. For those of you who are going to register here, don't wait until tomorrow -- do it today.

Think about the kind of country you want to see in a year or 10 years, in the next century. Think about what we can do if we believe in ourselves again, if we take responsibility for ourselves and our neighbors, if we face up to instead of deny our problems, and if we have leadership like we've had in the past which summons the best and not the worst from us. America's best days are ahead of us if we are willing to seek them. Thank you all very much.

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