

THE WHITE HOUSE

14 March 1996

Dear Governor Romer,

I have today read your recent State of the State address which Mrs. Clinton shared with the President who in turn shared it with me. Thank you for your continuing dedication to all our children - I'll think about that 8 year old's view and questions as I go through the days ahead. Carol Kase

3/14/96

Bea/Chano/Red

Alpen

By
This is good

Be

Be -
interesting speech

THE WHITE HOUSE

February 21, 1996

The Honorable Roy Romer
Governor
State of Colorado
136 State Capitol
Denver, Colorado 80203-2471

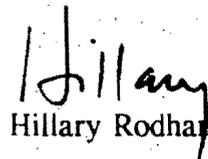
Dear Roy:

Thank you for sending me your eloquent and heartfelt State of the State address.

You asked for feedback on the end of the speech. I thought your image of a strong Masai warrior embracing the notion that life is good when the children are well was a powerful one. It conveys perfectly the message that our responsibilities lie with those who can defend themselves the least. I enjoyed the speech in its entirety and, as always, am grateful for your leadership and commitment to children.

With warm regards to you and Bea, I remain

Sincerely yours,



Hillary Rodham Clinton

Thanks too for our conversation.
I hope to continue talking with
you at the next available chance.

STATE OF COLORADO

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

136 State Capitol
Denver, Colorado 80203-1792
Phone (303) 866-2471



Roy Romer
Governor

January 31, 1996

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Clinton:

You will find enclosed a copy of my State of the State address as it was delivered on January 11.

I have set as a goal to make Colorado the best state in the nation to raise a child. You will find text of the speech outlining early childhood issues, concerns and programs on pages 2-8. We are especially excited about the new Bright Beginnings program which you will be hearing more about in the very near future. A portion of the speech, pages 9-13, also addresses public and higher education. I also would like to get your feedback on the images and symbols I used toward the close of my speech.

I am pleased to share this with you and to continue working toward a state and nation that place children as its highest priority. Best wishes to you.

Sincerely,

Roy Romer
Governor

Enclosure

STATE OF THE STATE
COLORADO GOVERNOR ROY ROMER
JANUARY 11, 1996

I'm really looking forward to this conversation.

And I want to bring greetings to all of you. Senator Norton, Speaker Berry, Senator Feeley, Representative Kerns, Mayor Webb, all of you.

I'd like to acknowledge the presence of my wife Bea a portion of my family. A lot of what I say today, comes from that experience.

I'd also like to remember Jeanne Faatz, this morning. I understand she's still in Chicago and has some serious injuries, and I think our hearts are with her.

Let me say, we have a lot to talk about.

Colorado is doing well.

Our economy is strong.

We live in one of the most beautiful places on earth.

And we are just blessed to live in Colorado, and we've worked hard to get where we are. We ought to be proud of what we've done together.

But I think we can do better. We cannot rest in our efforts to keep our economy strong.

We can't forget there are cracks in the foundation of this society that we need to try to heal. Not everyone has a seat at the table.

Now here's the central question, for me as Governor, for you as legislators, and for the citizens of Colorado: how can we take the good we have and reach for something higher?

Not all societies have that privilege; we do. And I think we can exercise that responsibility. How do we do it?

We've got to return to the basics.

Let me tell you a story. I called an old friend, John Murphy of Durango, a couple of months ago. We've been friends for 40 years. John was dying. I wanted to relate to him in a meaningful way, because I knew that this might be the last time we'd talked. And I wanted him to know that I was thinking of him and I wanted him to know how I was feeling. He interrupted me, because he knew what I was trying to do, and he said, "Roy, I feel good. I feel good about the life I've lived because I feel good about the way I raised my children. Not much else matters when you look back at life from that perspective."

Now, there are all kinds of ways that we could judge a society.

But I like John's way.

If we raise our children right, everything else will probably fit.

And so, as we look forward to our work together as we reach higher, I think we should commit ourselves – as a people in this community called Colorado – to make Colorado the very best place to raise a child.

Now, it's kind of a simple vision. It really is. But it will be the focus of my final term as Governor.

How can we make this the best place to raise a child?

Let's start by trying to look inside the mind of a typical Colorado family.

Parents – who are trying to do the best job they can, trying to raise their children, working one job, sometimes two, are going to ask these questions:

- is this job going to be here next year?
- can I afford housing and health insurance for my family?
- can I keep my family safe?
- will the values I try to instill in my children be overwhelmed by the peer relationships which they have, or by what they see on TV?
- can I find child care that I need, and can I afford it, and can I trust it, when I leave my child there?
- will my kids learn what they need to learn at school?

- can I take care of my parents when they're old and what about when I'm old?

How we – not just government, but as a people – address these anxieties, these needs, how we do it will define what kind of a place Colorado will become.

Now, I believe that we've got to focus ourselves – both as a community and as elected officials – on four challenges:

First, let's make the lives of young children our highest priority.

Second, let's make Colorado schools second to none.

Third let's be sure that we keep our economy the strongest in the nation.

And fourth let's keep our environment and natural beauty the envy of the world.

Now, if we do those four things, I think that we will keep faith with that vision of becoming the best place to raise a child.

I'd like to talk about each of these challenges.

Let me start with Early Childhood. I think our first challenge is to make the lives of our young children our highest priority.

Parents have always wanted the best for their children. But think about how much harder it is for parents today. Most of us grew up with a family nearby, where neighbors watched out for not just their children but our children. For many, that's no longer a reality.

There's a challenge of parenting, sometimes it's overwhelming. Those who need child care worry about the quality of that care. Every parent worries about being able to afford decent health care.

But let's start what are we doing.

Colorado has undertaken one of the most exciting and innovative strategies

to make this the best place for a child to be born and to grow up.

It's called Bright Beginnings.

It's a non-governmental program, it's volunteer, it's community-based. It's an effort to:

- support new parents;
- have universal access to health care for young children;
- to create "family-friendly" workplaces;
- have more effective support systems for teen parents; and
- to try to improve the quality of child care throughout Colorado.

Now, 55,000 babies are born each year in this state. They don't come with instruction books and they don't come with 1-800 numbers. Bright Beginnings therefore, is organized to provide what we call a "Warm Welcome." We want to get to the place where we can have a trained volunteer, non-government person, from the community visit everyone of those parents within 2 to 3 weeks of birth and show up and say 3 things:

- First, here's kind of a check list of what you may confront in the first year in the life of a child.
- Second, here is what's available in your community in your region to help you meet that check list; and
- Third, here's a mentorship, totally voluntary, that's available to you if you want it. So, that you can have somebody to consult with as you go through the first year of that baby's life.

Now Princess Di, in England, when she had her babies, she had such a visitor. That was very accepted in that culture. I think that is one of the steps that we can and we should make in beginning to help Colorado respond to the life of the early child.

Think about it: thousands of volunteers from churches, from service clubs, from the at-home moms, retirees, and others giving of themselves to care and nurture the youngest children among us.

We've already raised \$1 million in this effort. Brad Butler, the former chairman of the board of Procter & Gamble is Co-chairing it with us and Senator Tom Norton is also very supportive and is part of the leadership of this.

So this is a bipartisan government/non-government effort and it's one that I think has great promise.

Next, Child care.

In Colorado, most parents work. As a result, over 100,000 children spend 8-10 hours, five days a week, in child care.

And yet, they say most child care centers in Colorado are, at best average, sometimes mediocre, when you rate them in terms of safety, in terms of teacher training, in terms of equipment.

But the child care is too costly for many. Many parents take up to 23 percent of their incomes for child care. To help solve this problem I reached out to the business community and got some very, very good leadership and help here.

That business community has committed to work with us over a period of time, and they've made some suggestions already. They've suggested to me that we establish a voluntary child care check off on the state income tax returns to help improve child care facilities.

They have also recommended changing property tax assessments to allow child care facilities to be taxed at the residential rather than the commercial rates.

They suggested expanding opportunities for pre-school teachers to get training, and to apply quality standards to all child care programs that receive government support.

I'm also interested in their proposal to establish a refundable child care tax credit to provide financial support to working parents who need help in paying for child care.

These are good ideas and I would like to work with you on them and give them strong consideration.

Because it is critical to have more businesses involved in solving the child care crisis, this spring I'm going to ask business leaders to join me in a series of summits across the state to explore how the private sector can

better respond to the child care needs across the board.

Preschool.

In my first term, with your help, we established the Colorado Preschool Program. You know that we now are up to 8,500 children. And I would urge you to continue to support that program. And I also support opening it to three-year-olds as local need dictates.

The issue of fatherhood is a controversial subject; we've got to face it head on. An alarming number of children are growing up without fathers – 40 percent in Denver. Now being a parent is tough, but being a single parent is even tougher. Many do an outstanding job at that, but it's still tough.

Records show that kids without fathers are more likely to live in poverty, to commit violent crimes, to become teen parents at too early of an age and to leave their own children.

I convened a Task Force on Responsible Fatherhood that will make some recommendations that I hope you will consider along with me. Already, they've suggested that we revamp the cumbersome public assistance programs which has fathers paying the state to support their kids.

And they've proposed we re-think our approach to public programs, to the court system and to community resources to make sure that we are holding fathers responsible for their children, and not chasing them away.

Another thing that worries parents is the cost of health insurance for their own children.

Right now in Colorado 150,000 of our children don't have access to health care because their parents can't afford it through health insurance. Almost all of those children -- 87 percent -- have at least one parent who is employed.

Now think about that.

These are people who are employed and they do not have adequate coverage.

In a state that enjoys our level of prosperity, that's not right. That's just not right.

I understand that there is a lot of disagreement in this country about how to solve the health care problem. I'm not here to argue about that.

But can't we at least agree that in Colorado we have a collective moral obligation to hold our children harmless, and to provide each and every one of them with basic health care in the early years?

Can't we at least agree on that?

In the budget that I submitted to you, I have set aside \$14 million to begin to deal with this issue – an amount that we certainly can afford this year. It's not going to be enough but it's a start. I think we can be creative in how we use this money to reach the maximum number of children. We can build upon existing programs – like the Colorado Child Health Plan – or we can encourage innovative ideas to spring up in communities.

Representative Ben Clark is sponsoring legislation, I'm sure with others in the room, that supports a tax credit that builds on the insurance infrastructure already in place and gives incentives to businesses to be a part of the solution. I'm open to ideas and I'm sure that together we can solve this problem.

So, let's commit to one another today that, by the time this legislature adjourns 119 days from now, we will have put ourselves clearly on a path to provide health care to every child in Colorado.

Let me speak about it personally. I had some of our grandchildren in our home. You've been there, it's got marble floors. One of them the day before Christmas, running, 18 months old, bang, right on his head. Had a lump the size of my fist. I and the two parents rushed over to the emergency room of Children's Hospital, and the child was fine. We cared for the child, he got great medical care. His name is John Rockefeller Romer: No, no, not Rockefeller, (now that will make the news), John Firestone Romer. Once you get out of the country all those names sound the same to me.

But let me tell how I felt that morning.

I knew where that hospital was, I knew how to get there, I had a car. And I was trying to think of everybody else in the country the day before Christmas, who might not have the same knowledge.

You know, I have trouble eating, when I'm sitting next to a hungry person. I honestly do. And I think all of us need to think hard about this issue, of how can we, in a society as prosperous as ours, find a way to get some of the minimal elements of how you live the good life. And part of that is healthcare, that is available to all children. 150,000 in this state, do not have coverage. I think we can get that job done together.

If we are going to make Colorado the best place to raise a child, our first challenge is to make young children our highest priority.

Our next challenge is to make the schools that these kids attend second to none. Second to none in the world.

Every school day more than 650,000 kids go off to school. Many spend more time in school than they do with their parents.

But the parents are asking:

- Are my kids going to be safe when they get there?
- Are the values I am trying to teach them going to be reinforced, or undermined?
- Are they learning what they need to know to get a good job and be good citizens? Are they being challenged to be all that they can be?
- They are going to ask, what aren't they doing that we should be doing?
- Why aren't they bringing home more homework?

We've been on this issue a long time and we know there is no quick fix. All of you know that.

We're making progress, but we're not there yet.

Fundamentally, what matters most is improving student performance. We were right three years ago when we directed public schools to set high standards for student learning and to make sure students meet those standards. Your leadership was crucial on that struggle and it still is.

We now have model standards in place at the state level. Communities are setting their own standards, and we'll have the first measurement of our progress next year.

Now, Colorado's standards quite frankly are a model for the nation.

This morning, I was on a conference call with 5 other governors, Lou Gerstner and six other executives. (Lou Gerstner is the head of IBM), meeting in Chicago. Let me tell you what it's about. We are going to have a summit on Educational Standards and Assessments in March sponsored by executives and by governors. And we are trying to take the next step because this is crucial. If we are truly going to have good schools, we've got to set clearly what it is we expect a youngster to know and be able to do.

Then we've got to have clear measurement. That's just the start.

The next thing is we've got to tell parents: This is what your youngsters should know and be able to do in math in the fourth grade, and this is where he is. And if that youngster is on a failing course, we've got to blow the whistle for that youngster, for those parents and for that school. But then we've got to take further steps. We've got to give that youngster more time on task. We should not pass them from the fourth grade to the fifth grade if they haven't accomplished what they should do in the fourth grade. You know, let me tell you, I've said this before, it's kind of like an educational cat scan. You say this is where that youngster is. If he is failing, we've got to stop right there and do something because otherwise it accumulates throughout life.

Now, what do we do? We need to improve the amount of time the kids spend in school and on task. That's why in the budget I gave you on school finance I recommend that you put one percent for inflation - 22 million dollars.

I recommend you put another 22 million dollars out there, but make it available only if the school pledges to expand the amount of time kids spend learning.

You see it's only fair. It doesn't make sense to set high standards and do accurate assessment and then don't give the kid a chance to learn.

It's just not fair. So you've got to do this; the schools have got to do this.

Beyond that, we've got to have teachers that are better trained to do the job. I'm therefore suggesting that \$10 million of that increased money for public schools be absolutely set aside for improved instruction. I think teachers and schools will welcome that. But I think that we have a leg up on most people in the nation, and it's our responsibility to keep going down that course.

Now let me also speak about Charter Schools.

I think we need more innovation and more choices in schools; different students learn in different ways. One of the most promising efforts in this area has been charter schools – schools that teachers and parents can organize and run. And we should continue to support and expand charter schools, and a commission has been studying this and has examined some ideas and will share them for improvement and I think we ought to follow those recommendations.

We also need to do a better job of using technology as a tool of learning. I think it's amazing how many of us, particularly over Christmas, have our grandchildren coming to us showing us how to run the computer. It is absolutely unbelievable how fast this world is going to change in terms of the way we handle information. We need to get all our youngsters familiar with that information revolution. Familiar with the hardware and the software. But what a wonderful tool to learn.

Well folks we can't do it unless we think a lot more clearly than we have to date on how we do it.

I'm going to come back on technology when I speak about the economy.

But simply put, we need to get the right pipes going to the right place, you know the conduits for high data transmission. Then we need to find a way to share that cost. There's no sense of going in alone; a higher educational institution doing it this way, a public school this way, a hospital this way, the police and sheriff doing it this way and the private sector doing it another way. We ought to get together and get a plan. We ought to get a very firm plan in Colorado as to how we are going to put in the hardware and the piping. Then we ought to get standards so that each

system can talk to the other. Then we ought to make some collective purchasing. Collective purchasing, dealing with the private sector so that we can get this job done.

Many of you are dealing with this subject.

I've asked Andre Pettigrew, the head of Dept. Of Administration, to put this as one of his highest priorities.

And I'll tell you as governor, I am not going to approve one item going singular. I'm just going to put a stop to all the kinds of investments we make in this business until we can do it in a coordinated, efficient, cost effective fashion.

But the same way I'm going to say let's get with it, there is a possibility that we can use technology to improve learning.

But also just remember it's not a miracle cure. It's only a tool, it only follows what we ought to previously define is about what they should learn and how the learning takes effect.

Kids can't learn in a disruptive environment. Together, we've taken steps to bring discipline back to our classrooms.

Before that, we all know that no matter how well we educate our kids, their future will never be what it should be unless they are safe in their neighborhoods.

Over the past few years, we have worked together on the fight against crime. We've banned guns in the hands of kids.

We've strengthened our criminal laws.

In this session, we should maintain our funding for the youth crime prevention initiative. We also are revising the children's code. I support many of the proposed changes.

But I want to be very clear right up front: I will not support ending compulsory education. I'll veto it.

And, I challenge you – as I have before – to create alternative schools for expelled students. We can't throw away kids. I think we've got to be very disciplined. You've got to say, "if your not going to contribute to the learning atmosphere in this room - you're out of here." But we are smart enough to know just to say "you're out of here" is going to cost us thousands if not millions of dollars for that child unless we give them another way. We've got an obligation, both for the child and to the community to get another way.

We need to focus upon the critical transition between school and getting a job. And I want to compliment the Lt. Governor, Gail Schoettler, for the leadership that she's been giving to us in this area.

School-to-work is a community partnership of businesses, schools and community organizations coming together to fundamentally change the way we educate our children. It links a strong curriculum, based on rigorous standards, with career knowledge and experience.

Representative Foster, I remember visiting a plant in your community. It had three initials I can't remember the name of it, but it was a wonderful illustration of a youngster, a high school youngster, operating a very complicated lathe. And this youngster had not just learned to operate the lathe, he'd learned how to set the computer program for it. As I talked with him he said "Governor I want to, after I get this job under my belt, go for engineering". Absolutely a wonderful example in your community of what School-to-Work can do. We need to do more of that.

All right, I've been speaking about early childhood, about public education, let me turn to higher education.

If this is to be the best place to raise a child, then, in addition to reforming our public schools, we also must improve higher education in the state.

Post-secondary education has become a necessity for many. Our system must continue to be of high quality and focused upon the needs of the workplace. But it's also got to be affordable and assessable.

Now, I support legislation, and I believe it will be authored by Senator Meiklejohn and others, that will hold our higher educational institutions accountable for quality in both teaching and research. This legislation

insures that our investment in higher education is as effective as possible and it provides students and parents information they need to make better decisions about selecting an institution that fits for them.

I'd also like to speak about technology and higher education.

We need to take advantage of the opportunities that are presented by new technological forms. I'm excited about what can be done here. For students to get training and credentials now they have to attend a place called college or university. And they need to be accredited by that. I believe we are going to come to a way in which we can offer education beyond high school and we would call it a virtual university.

I am working with Mike Leavitt of Utah and some other Governors on this point. Let me describe it. Many companies now have within their corporate structure extensive training and they will give a certificate of mastery to their employees. You can see in the future where people will be learning -- from distant learning, CD-ROM and many other ways. But if they are reading, to get acknowledgment of what they know, they need some kind of examination and accreditation. We can develop that. So that whether or not you're out there studying with distant learning, CD-ROM, or what ever, you can come to a place and say, "I want to have you verify my knowledge and I want you to accredit my knowledge." That will be a way in which we can not only make education more assessible but at lower costs.

Now, let me tell you one other kicker that comes from that. When we began to be able to verify what is the value added -- what you've began with and what you've got now and get certified -- then we go to the college and university community and say "Can you apply this to your group?" It will be a very interesting way for us to measure quality and we need that.

There is some exciting things out there for us and the use of technology.

I'd like to turn to the economy.

If this is going to be the best place to raise a child in Colorado, we need to nurture an economy to provide best jobs and the best wages we can find.

It's simple. You can't raise a child without a job.

Now, let's talk now about this challenge – How can we keep our economy strong?

Right now it's probably one of the healthiest ones in the nation.

We have 3.8 percent unemployment. More Coloradans have jobs – 2 million of us – than at any time in our history.

But in the new world economy in which we compete, we can't be complacent. We've got to change as times change. We've got to maintain that economic advantage.

That's why we're restructuring our economic development programs to make them more efficient. We've got a wonderful new person heading it: John Dill.

That's why we are targeting businesses to provide high quality jobs, such as telecommunications, environmental restoration -- jobs that pay good wages.

That's why we are reforming the way government deals with businesses. I want to really compliment the Health Department for the way in which they have reached out to businesses and said "We are going to have a user friendly Health Department, but we are still going to do our jobs."

And that is why we need to re-examine the enterprise zone program this year. It's helped us in the past; it's clearly gotten out of bounds. It needs substantial reform. And if you can't reform it, you probably ought to get rid of it. And I challenge you to do that this session.

Now, these measures will provide a climate for continued success. But we need to do more. We need to make sure that our infrastructure improves and improves people's lives and keeps pace with our economy.

People are stuck in traffic. Too many of our roads are in bad shape -- and there are not enough transportation alternatives for people who want them.

Now, at a minimum, we need to allocate an additional \$100 million from our general fund reserves in each of the next five years, to help fund highways and other transportation projects.

But even this is not going to be enough. Local communities around the state have identified needs that far outpace our current funding capacity.

And for that reason, I've appointed a Blue Ribbon Transportation Panel of community leaders statewide group to assess transportation and funding alternatives. Now, the specific recommendations will be available to us in February.

And we need to find a way to meet these needs together. But whatever we do in this process should not take away from our other priorities. That's why I will oppose any effort to reinstate the Noble bill. I'll veto it.

Now, let me tell you why. It's very important you know where I am on this as you begin this session. We have good times right now for this general fund. I can't tell what our times are going to be four years from now and I can't tell you fully what the federal government is going to do.

But I don't want to take money away from educating kids to fill potholes.

I'm quite willing to work with you. Annually, you may want to look at your budget and say "OK we will move some money over to highways." But I'm not going to erode that tax base permanently. It's the wrong thing to do. We have had historically a division here and I think you ought to keep it. I think our highest priority is to maintain our capacity to make this place the best place to raise a child and that means to sustain that general fund's ability to support education.

We also need to focus on air and rail transport systems.

And infrastructure obviously, is not just highways and rail and air. I said it's telecommunications, and I spoke about that earlier. I think that as we work that out together we will find a truly creative way to make the new infrastructure of telecommunications a useful tool.

The fourth challenge: growth and the environment.

The growth we have experienced in recent years has us nearly busting at the seams in many areas, and Coloradans are genuinely concerned about whether we are going to be able to preserve our open spaces, keep our air clean, protect

our wildlife, and preserve the uniqueness of our different communities and our different regions:

From our farms to our mountains, to our rivers, to our valleys, this is truly one of the most beautiful places on earth. We have, in my judgment, a sacred obligation – to ourselves, to our children and to future generations not to lose that beauty.

Last year at this time, we started the Smart Growth and Development initiative to go to Colorado's communities to identify specific and effective ways to make growth work for us, not against us. We have focused on an agenda that has been driven by citizens from the bottom up, not the top down – from the community level and not the state level.

Thousands of Coloradans have participated in this process to better their communities. We need to keep faith with those citizens, and we need to take their recommendations seriously, and we need to act on them this session.

The recommendations cover dozens of important issues from economic development to education to transportation to agriculture to the environment and provide a road map of how we maintain our high quality of life in Colorado.

I've already discussed many of these issues but I'd like to highlight two recommendations.

First, we need to give counties better tools to address land use issues. Now I've listened very carefully to your comments and when you say this is a matter we should leave to local government and local communities. I agree with you. I just want to give local governments and local communities the tools they have to have to deal with it on a local level. So if we are serious about giving them great ability to grow smart we need to challenge the so called 35- acre rule, which restricts a local community's ability to manage its own growth effectively. Now I believe, through this Smart Growth process, citizens have developed a balanced set of suggestions, and I urge you to act on them. We've worked very hard to try to get all perspectives in on this solution.

Second, we need to reform the structure and mission of the Land Board so that it responds to a broader set of community values. The Land Board manages 3 million acres of state land. Because of the narrow constitutional mandate to

manage these lands for maximum revenue, the Land Board's actions too often conflict with local plans and local priorities. Now, allowing the Land Board more flexibility will require a change to the state Constitution, and I ask you to act to refer that measure to voters.

Now there are some other challenges in the environment. We have made great progress in cleaning up the air. Twenty years ago, for instance, the metro area violated the federal standard for carbon monoxide over a 100 times a year. Now, it's only one or two times a year, and the trend continues downward. This year, for the first time since federal air quality standards were set, we will be in compliance with the standard for ozone.

What we have done has worked, and we cannot afford to reverse course. We must demand that the programs work effectively and efficiently. But it is not too much to ask metro area drivers to have their cars inspected once every two years to make sure they don't pollute our air.

And we need to continue to broadly support locally driven efforts to clean up the Brown Cloud in Denver – not because the federal government tells us to do it, but because it's the right thing to do.

Now, I'm very excited about the partnerships – with the help of Great Outdoors Colorado – that are being creative to preserve open space. I particularly would mention the Yampa Valley, we have some wonderful possibilities of working together to preserve those values.

Now, I said we should make Colorado the best place to raise a child. And I was talking about our four key challenges. Let me review them.

First, make the lives of our young children our highest priority.
Second, build the very best education system in the nation.
Third, keep our economy the strongest in the nation.
And fourth, keep our environment and natural beauty the envy of the world.

Now, I think we know how to do this. We have worked on this agenda before, we've worked on it together and we need to continue that work.

But there is another challenge that I've got to mention; and that's the challenge of our relationship to the federal government.

The budget debate is critical to Colorado and our nation's future. I believe in a balanced budget. I believe in a balanced budget in seven years. But what changes the federal government make are crucial for Colorado.

We don't yet know the final result of this budget debate, particularly in the areas of Medicaid and welfare reform.

But it is likely we will be handed more responsibilities and fewer resources.

We will have to decide what, as a state government, we can pay for, and what will have to be taken care of by individuals and by communities.

We shouldn't kid ourselves. It won't be easy. And, it isn't going to be done quickly.

Now, I can't predict what is going to happen in Washington or when it will happen. But we should continue the welfare reforms that we began two years ago; they are working. We should expand them state wide. We are on the right course here and we did it together in a bipartisan way. I just want to say we should continue to do that.

Secondly, we should continue to work toward efficiencies in Medicaid, to an extension of manage care. And I will be working with you also on that.

Let me put this on the table. Any decisions on reappropriations of federal funds for Medicaid and welfare ought to be done jointly by the executive and legislative branches. I think you've all had that question on your minds. I as a governor, believe that the issue of how you allocate welfare and Medicaid funds is one that a legislative body and a governor ought to both have responsibilities for. And I think that may have been a doubt in your minds let me clear that up.

But let me say we, I can give you some I think some information that will be helpful. We started this with the federal government talking about a cut of \$182 billion; in Medicaid. As of three days ago the proposal put on the table by the majority in Congress on Medicaid was a cut of \$85 billion. Now think a moment about that. We initially were faced with a bill that passed Congress that cut Medicaid \$182 billion; now we have a proposal on the table that says \$85 billion. That is real progress. I was looking for a letter, I don't have with me that I wrote in August of this year to my fellow governors. And the essence of that letter was the first thing we've got to do on Medicaid is reduce that cut.

It's paralysis, it's wrong. They have not done that, so whatever your projection was for what you've got to is reduced by half.

Now secondly, there's still a lot more decisions to be made. I will predict to you that you will have a great deal of more flexibility.

I want to begin to conclude.

And as you know, that's an honest statement, when I say begin to conclude.

I want to tell you a story. I've been working the last few weeks with three Republican governors and two Democratic governors on one of the toughest issues -- Medicaid.

We met last Friday and made substantial progress. Not total; don't know if it will hold together; but we made substantial progress.

The governors in the room were Engler from Michigan, Thompson from Wisconsin, Leavitt from Utah, Wilson from California was on the phone, myself, Chiles from Florida and Miller from Nevada. Now the key to our progress that we made last Friday was that we trusted each other. We had very honest differences, but we were trying to stand in the other persons' shoes, in the other states' shoes, trying to find common ground.

Let me just say from Colorado's point of view, we're a state that's going to grow. We have a whole different cut on how you put that formula together in a state like New York or Michigan whose population may not grow.

I was there trying to represent Colorado's interest and the nation's interest and the interest of people who are served by that program.

But back to this: we were trying to stand in each others' shoes trying to find common ground. And by common ground I don't mean just coming half way between two opposite positions. I mean continuing to push our minds so that we can discover a true common purpose, a win for both sides.

And more important, a win for those that depended upon us to solve the problem.

Now there is a lesson in this, as we do our work in Colorado, whether as executives side or as legislators, whether as Republican, or as Democrats, whether it's rural or urban, we need to understand that there is a community of interest, a common good that we all need to reach for, to try to find.

We have to decide what is most important to us – our ideology, or the community of which we are a part.

If our *ideology* is the most important to each of us, then chances are we won't trust one another enough to solve our problems and we'll end up destroying our community.

But if our *community* is most important to each of us, then we will find a way to work together and to trust each other enough to solve our problems.

Our ideology will guide us, *guide us*, but it will not control us. In the end, it's our community – our finding a way to live together – that must come first.

This is what our job is in this assembly. This is what we mean when we talk about restoring trust in our institutions, civility to our public discussion.

Part of this is to honor the diversity of people – the diversity of their lives, their heritage, their cultures.

We need to get away from the narrow public debate about who “real Americans” are, and focus instead on a debate about what America's real problems are.

We ought not focus on what separates us, but on what unites us.

And what ought to unite us is making this the best place to raise a child. Now we have a role to play as legislators, as governor, as citizens. But in this, business of raising children we all have another role to play. And that's the personal role model that children use us for.

All of us have gone through this where that child is looking at us and is learning about what it is to be adult. I want to close with a couple of comments on this area. Let me read you a song - it's a 60's and early 70's song by Harry Chapin, “Cats and the Cradle”. Bear with me.

A child arrived just the other day,
He came to the world in the usual way.

But there were planes to catch and bills to pay,
He learned to walk while I was away,

And he was talking before I knew it, and as he grew, he'd say,
"I'm gonna be like you dad, you know I'm gonna be like you,

My son turned 10 just the other day,
He said, "Thanks for the ball dad, come on let's play."
"Can you teach me to throw?"

I said, "I not today, I got a lot to do."
He said, "That's okay."

He walked but his smile never dimmed and said,
"You know I'm gonna grow up just like him."

Well he came from college just the other day,
So much like a man I just had to say,
"Son, I'm proud of you, can you sit for awhile?"

He shook his head and he said with a smile,
"What I'd really like dad is to borrow the car keys,
see ya later, can I have them please?" I've long since retired, my sons
moved away,
I called him up just the other day and I said,
"I'd like to see you if you don't mind."

He said, "I'd love to dad if I could find the time."
"You see the new job's a hassle and the kids with the flu,
and it's sure nice talkin' to you dad, it's been sure nice talkin' to you."

And as I hung up the phone it occurred to me,
He's grown up just like me, my boy was just like me.

Why do I share that? I think all of us have this experience of role models. I
want to share a little bit with you. I had a role model. It was my own father.
He paid a lot of attention to me, but it was in a interesting way. I was born in

1928. When I was 6 years of age, he began to keep a journal with me about what I earned and what I spent. I want to give you four short items from that journal, so that you can get the role model that I had and what was the message.

Now let me read it to you:

January 17th. There's a column, plus and minus, in and out. For 38 A's in your reading book, five cents. OK. Let's look at the next entry. This is January 4, 1935. "Singing well at the Church program, 25 cents." Now, there was a judgment there.

But then there's this entry: December 5, 1935, you see my father was my banker, and he kept a count, and what I had I got interest on. And he religiously for a year, added up what the interest was at the end of the year. Entry, December 5, 1935. "Interest paid to date, 26 cents; less amount spent for Christmas shopping, 40 cents, deficit in Christmas shopping over interest, 14 cents," subtracted from the column.

That was my first confrontation with a Republican philosophy of life.

One last note. This is October 1, 1938, for things I did not do minus 25 cents.

Now, I only share this with you because it was another illustration of what mentoring is and the importance of a role model.

As I try to understand the world of children, when I enter a room, I often get down on the floor and try to see the world as they see it.

Recently, I've tried to imagine what I do with an eight year old by my side, observing not only what are the decisions that I make in public life, but also the way in which I conduct my private life.

Let us, let me throw out a challenge to you, as we go through this legislative session: every once in a while let's image that eight year old standing at our side asking us these questions.

- What kind of world are you creating for me?
- Is it a world in which I'm going to be able to learn all that I should learn?
- Is it a world in which I'm going to be healthy?

- Is it a world in which I don't have to eat next to somebody who is hungry?
- Is it a world in which I'm going to have safe streets?
- But particularly is it a world in which the values, the way in which you treat other people, are things that I respect?

You know I never told John Murphy this story, but I think he would have liked it.

Among the most accomplished and fabled tribes of Africa are the Masai. They are considered to have warriors more fearsome and more intelligent than all others. And it's still the tradition, among the Masai, even those with no children of their own, that when they greet each other, they say "and how are the children?"

The traditional answer is "all the children are well."

It means that life is good. That our daily struggles do not preclude us from placing our highest value on children.

Now that is our standard.

This is how our work will be judged.

If our children are not well, then what could possibly be right?

If the children are well, then what possibly could be wrong?

Fifty years from now, if the answer in Colorado "all the children are well," then we will have done our work.

Thank you very much.