

who were developing new industries and new technologies and new hope for the future. I saw people working together across racial lines. But I also saw industries dying on the vine and people who had worked all their lives losing jobs and losing their health care. And I saw people divided by race, too.

I saw everything about America writ large here in this State: all that is best, all that is most troubling. But I saw an awful lot of hope, too. Today when I left the White House to come here, we had a crowd of folks come out on the lawn to say goodbye, and when I knew that we'd bring in some folks just from the public who were there and some people who work in the White House, many of whom had never met the President before. And I had so many people who work in correspondence who were telling me that the letters are coming in at record rates here, massive numbers of letters for me, for my wife, for my daughter, people writing us about their hopes, their dreams, their new ideas.

I'm going to do a town hall meeting tonight, a televised meeting connecting four cities, not just Detroit but three others, too, and all across the country. You know, between June and November I did nine of those. But I started a year ago in New Hampshire doing them, because I believe that people like me shouldn't hide from the people who elected them. I think we ought to be accountable.

There will be many difficult and challenging days ahead. But if you'll stay in touch with me, if you'll let me hear the truth of your feelings and your ideas, when you agree and when you disagree, I think we can change this country. And if you will give courage to your elected officials and tell them that that's what you voted for, for a change, that as difficult as it may be to change, staying where we are is the most expensive course of all, we can do it.

You know, shortly after you elected me to President, I was given my first piece of good news and my first piece of bad news. The good news was that consumer confidence was up and people were feeling better and people thought we could change the economy; that American companies, in a tough global environment, were becoming more productive; that interest rates had come down some and people were financing their home loans. The bad news was that no new jobs were being created in our economy and that incomes were not going up and that

after the election it was announced that the Government deficit was going to be \$50 billion higher next year and just about that high every year thereafter during my term of office. And so I had to go back to the drawing board and figure out how we were going to put the American people first, take on the special interests, invest in jobs and incomes and deal with the health care crisis and still bring the deficit down, as I promised to do, and to do it in a way that is fair to the middle class, people who've worked hard and paid the bills for 12 years. It isn't easy, I'll tell you that. But I'm doing my best.

We have spent literally hours and hours and hours, the administration people and I, and I've met with large numbers of people in Congress, many people many times, since I became President just 3 weeks ago, doing almost nothing but focusing on this economy. And I am telling you I am confident that if we'll make some challenging decisions now and put this country on the right path, we can lift this economy up, we can create jobs, we can deal with the health care crisis and have a bright future.

But remember: Everywhere I went in this election I said, "Do not vote for me if you're going to quit on election day. Do not come to the Inaugural and celebrate the victory unless you're going to help us make the victory good." I need your help. I didn't see a single soul all those thousands of miles I traveled on those buses, stopping on the country roads and going to the big cities, I never did see a person holding up a sign saying, "Everything's just fine. Leave well enough alone." Not the first sign. Even the people who honestly disagreed with me on a whole range of issues never said they believed that we didn't have to have the courage to change.

And so tonight I ask you, watch what we do closely. If you think I'm wrong, call or write and tell me. But continue to support me with your prayers and your voice and your conviction, and give the Members of Congress the courage to change. That is what the election was all about. And we are going to try to make good on it.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:10 p.m. at the Selfridge Air National Guard Base. In his remarks, he referred to John D. Dingell, chairman, House Energy and Commerce Committee.