

Remarks at a Town Meeting in Detroit February 10, 1993

The President. Thank you, thank you very much. Let me, first of all, thank all of you for being here in Michigan, and thank our audiences in Washington and Georgia and Florida for joining us, and all the people across this country who are watching this event.

I started doing these televised town meetings a year ago in New Hampshire. Between June and November I did nine that were televised alone, including one here at this station. And I wanted to come out of the White House 3 weeks to the day after I became President because I can see now, after only 3 weeks, how easy it is for a President to get out of touch, to be caught up in the trappings of Washington, and basically to be told by people that nothing needs to be changed or you can't change things.

Let me just briefly say, I want to take as much time as possible for questions, but I want to say one or two things real quickly. I believe I got elected on a commitment to change America, to create jobs, try to raise incomes, to face the health care crisis, to try to liberate the Government from special interests and turn it back to the people, and to try to reduce the deficit and put America on a path to long-term health and recovery, bringing the American people together.

There's been some good news and bad news since I won the election. The good news is that productivity of American firms is up. People are buying houses because interest rates are down. Consumer confidence is up since the election. I like that. People think things are going to be better.

There's been some bad news. With all these economic improvements, we aren't generating new jobs. And the deficit of this country is about \$50 billion a year bigger than I was told it was going to be before the election.

So we have to put together a plan that keeps my commitments to you, invest in you, in your jobs, in your education, your health care, and your future; that brings that debt down; that deals with the health care crisis; and that does it in a way that's fair to all Americans.

I've been working almost exclusively on the economic issues of the country since I became President. I've got another week to put it to-

gether. And I wanted to come up here tonight and just listen to your questions, answer them as candidly as I could, and share with you as much as I can my feelings about where we're going to go.

But I'll say this: All the hundreds of thousands and maybe a million miles that I've traveled, I never saw one person along the highway with a sign that said, "Things are just fine the way they are. Don't change anything." So I'm going to keep trying to change, and I'm going to try to stay in touch with you this whole 4 years so that you can honestly tell me what you think.

I'm really proud of the fact that the voter turnout was not only up, we not only had the biggest crowd for the Inauguration in history, but the mail and the phone calls in the White House are running at record levels, some good, some critical. But that's good. That's democracy. And it proves that people really feel, at least so far, that I'm going to listen and try to move forward. And that's what we're here to do tonight. So let's begin.

Bill Bonds. Thank you very much, Mr. President. You know, in reality there are several town meetings tonight besides our audience here at WXYZ. The President is going to be taking questions from people in three other major American cities. From the far northwest, we welcome the people at station KOMO in Seattle, Washington. Ken Schramm will be the moderator, bringing us questions from the people of that Evergreen State; Ann Bishop, our moderator from station WPLG in Miami, Florida; from our station in Atlanta, Georgia, Bill Nigut taking questions from the people visiting him at station WSB.

The response from the people in these American cities has been overwhelming. And we'll begin right now by taking a question from a member of the audience here at WXYZ in Detroit and see if this bird's going to fly tonight.

Our first question is from Susan Esser. Susan Esser was the political coordinator for the Ross Perot campaign for the Presidency in the State of Michigan. I suspect this is going to be about—well, it's "the economy, stupid," as we heard—the economy.