

opportunity to live it. I ran for President because I feared we were in danger of losing that right. At a moment of great change in our history, as we move from the industrial age into the information age, as we end the cold war and move into the global economy of the 21st century, I believe our purpose has to be to keep the American dream alive for all Americans.

To do that, I have fought for three things: first, a new economic strategy to help our people compete and win in the new global economy; second, a New Covenant with the American people that offers more opportunity to everyone willing to assume personal responsibility for their own lives; and third, a new kind of Government, a leaner but not a meaner Government that cuts yesterday's programs and bureaucracy to make room for tomorrow's solutions, rooted in responsibility, empowerment of our citizens, the strength of our communities.

In 2 years we've made a good start. We have a strong economy with 5.6 million new jobs. We've made historic cuts in the deficit, enough to take \$11,000 in debt off of every family's future. We've cut the size of Government. There are 100,000 fewer people working for the Federal Government than there were on the day I became President. And we've made lots of programs more efficient and more effective. And we've offered the American people new opportunities that demand more responsibility, from more affordable college loans to the family leave program to giving our local communities the resources they need to lower the crime rate.

But despite this progress, too many Americans are still working harder for less. They don't have the security they need and deserve because they work hard and play by the rules. As we face the challenges of the 21st century, too many Americans remain in danger of falling behind or fear that they will still be left behind as they have been in years past.

That's why I proposed the middle class bill of rights, which might be better called the middle class bill of rights and responsibilities. It gives Americans the chance to arm themselves for the new economy and to lift their incomes. It gives middle class families the opportunities they need to raise their children, pay for college, save money for the things families need, and get the training and skills they need to prosper.

It offers a tax deduction for all education after high school. It offers lower taxes for families

with young children. It offers an individual retirement account with tax-free withdrawals for costs other than retirement that are devoted to the future, costs for education, for health care, for care of an elderly parent, for buying a first home. And it offers a training account of over \$2,600 for those who are unemployed or who are lower wage workers who want to get more skills to improve their own futures.

This program furthers all three of my objectives. It helps all of us to meet the challenges of the new economy. It helps us to build that New Covenant of opportunity in return for responsibility. And it cuts Government and changes the way it works to make it more modern, less bureaucratic, more flexible, more focused on personal empowerment. I hope the new Congress will pass the middle class bill of rights, and I welcome anyone else's ideas that advance these same goals.

In the new Congress, my test will be: Does an idea expand middle class incomes and opportunities? Does it promote values like family and work, responsibility and community? Does it contribute to strengthening the new economy and to building a better future for all of us? If it does, I'll be for it, no matter who proposes it. And if it doesn't, I'll oppose it.

One of the best examples of what we're trying to do is something we've already begun to do, our national service program, AmeriCorps. It helps those who help themselves in America. It says, take responsibility to serve your country at the grassroots level, and we'll give you the opportunity to get the education you need to build a better future for yourself. Already there are 20,000 AmeriCorps volunteers serving their communities while earning money for college. There are more people now in AmeriCorps in this year than ever served in the Peace Corps in a single year.

On Monday, Martin Luther King Day, I've called for a national day of service. And AmeriCorps volunteers will be hard at work all cross our country rebuilding a school in Atlanta, rebuilding housing in Memphis, helping the flood victims in Los Angeles. I hope you will join them because the idea and the ideal of service, service to country, service to community, service to our fellow citizens, is central to our Nation's future.

Dr. King's most profound lesson was that in America, "me" depends on "we." As he said, "We are all caught in an inescapable network