

We have made a good beginning. We have 5.6 million more jobs. We have a lower Federal deficit. We've taken \$11,000 in debt off of every family in America, and that means a brighter future. We have the smallest Federal Government we've had in over 30 years, but we're doing things more effectively. We're also offering opportunities to people that demand that they assume more responsibility, from expanding Head Start to making college loans more affordable for more people.

But we all know that there is a lot more to be done. More than half the adult work force in America is working harder today for lower wages than they were making 10 years ago. Another 1 million Americans in working families lost their health insurance last year. Millions of American workers wonder if their retirement is secure, and we're working hard on that.

We see a lot of upheaval. There are still a lot of people who don't feel safe on their streets, in their neighborhoods, in their schools. Even though the crime rate is coming down where people have done what has been done here in Los Angeles—to put more police on the street and to work on projects like the Community Build project that we supported that the mayor and I visited yesterday, where ex-gang members are teaching other kids to lead the gangs to turn away from violence, to go to education and work and away from things that are destructive—we have a long way to go.

That's why I so strongly hope that we can, together, without regard to party, make a commitment that, in this year, we will go back when the Congress is in full session and working and adopt what I call the middle class bill of rights. Let's don't just have indiscriminate tax cuts, let's control the deficit and focus tax relief on the people who need it most, on strengthening families and making education more available to all American people. That will get us into the next century.

I think we should lower taxes on families with young children. I think we should make all Americans able to save money in an IRA and then withdraw it, tax-free, to pay for their own education or health care or to help them care for their parents. I think we should give people who need more training because they're unemployed the right not just to sign up for a Government program but to get a check which says, this check can be spent at the educational insti-

tution of your choice to raise your income. That's what I think we should do.

But more important than anything else, in the next century in the information age, having an education will have more to do with income and options and choices than ever before. And so I believe that we should finally—and we should have done it long ago—we ought to make all educational expenses after high school tax deductible. That's important.

We made interest paid on home mortgages tax deductible decades ago. Why? Because owning a home was important to the idea of the American dream. In the 21st century we may not get to homeownership if we don't have an education. Let's make that tax deductible. That's important to our future.

And I might say, that is the essence of what we ought to be about, because you cannot take advantage of that opportunity without being responsible. People can offer you an education, but you have to get it. That is what we ought to be doing, giving opportunity in return for responsibility.

The New Covenant comes down to this: We deserve opportunity, but we have to earn success. And that is what the people of California have shown over and over and over again.

Let me close with this. The great writer Wallace Stegner called this part of America "hope's native home." It was built by people he called, and I quote, "The stickers, not just those who pillage and run but those who settle and love the life they have made and the place they have made it in."

Today we salute all of you, the stickers, the settlers, the rebuilders of this great State. Let us take what you have done here and use it as a model for our entire beloved country into the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at the Northridge Oviatt Library. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Richard Riordan of Los Angeles, CA; Blenda Wilson, president, California State University at Northridge; Lt. Gov. Gray Davis and Gov. Pete Wilson of California; and Zev Yaroslavsky, a Los Angeles County supervisor.