

all of us know in our heart of hearts that that will be a slogan and a dream only, unless we give to all of our children and expect from all of our children world-class educational opportunities and world-class learning.

What I want to do in the next 2 weeks leading up to my State of the Union Address to the Congress and to the American people, is to lay out some concrete things we can do in Washington to help to achieve those objectives. We do live in a time of enormous possibility. I was just—you know, it's—the last couple of days is the first free time I've had in a while—[laughter]—and I was trying to create some more space in our living quarters in the White House, and I was moving some reference books around that our daughter sometimes uses and her father and mother sometime use. But I was—there was one on the Age of Reason and one on the Age of Enlightenment. And I really do think there's a good chance that the 21st century will be called something like the Age of Possibility or the Age of Promise, when people write about it 100 years from now, because it really will be possible for more people across the world to live out their dreams and live up to their God-given abilities than ever before in human history. It will be possible. But “possible” or an “Age of Promise,” those are operative words. There are no guarantees here.

And in order to realize that promise, we've got to make sure our people are prepared for it. There is a veritable revolution in the way we work and live because of science and technology. The world which was once divided by the cold war is now united by not only free markets and open trade but by common security challenges that threaten all open societies. Young people are continually entering jobs that weren't invented a couple of years ago. The young people in this great hall today will be doing jobs, many of them that have not been imagined by any of us here. And it's very important to understand that.

I spent a day at the National Institute of Health not very long ago going through in some detail the status of the human genome project. And it is clear to me that before very long, when young parents like Secretary Riley's son and daughter-in-law come home with a baby from the hospital, there really will be a map of the baby's genetic code available to the parents. Some of it, of course, will occasionally be troubling and profoundly worrying. But by and

large what it will do is to give us a way of maximizing the health and potential of all people from medical care to diet to exercise to understanding how they can best live their lives from the beginning. No one would ever have imagined this.

Just in the last couple of years, we've seen the first successful treatment for stroke. It now seems possible that we might actually be able to repair some of the damage done by strokes. We have uncovered two genes that seem to be at the basis of either the cause of, or dramatic propensity to, breast cancer. We have seen nerve transplants to the spines of laboratory animals which has given movement to the lower limbs of laboratory animals that had their spines severed.

The Internet was literally, as I said in the Inaugural Address, the mystical province of physicists 10 years ago. Today, it's an encyclopedia that 8- and 9-year-old kids teach their parents how to use. [Laughter]

When I became President, 3 million Americans—thanks in large measure to technology—were working in their homes full time. At the end of my first term, 12 million Americans were. At the end of my second term, it is estimated that 30 million Americans will be. Not all good—it will also pose some new challenges: How can we continue to maintain our community? How can people work together in teams productively if they either need to or have to do some of their work at home?

But change is out there. At a time like this, it is critical that we not only know certain things but that we be able to learn for a lifetime. And we know that requires an enormous grounding, not only in the subjects we master but in the way we learn, which is why I was so glad in the introduction to hear Mary talk about different ways of teaching. Because the way teachers are teaching now engage the children in a learning process that they can then apply to any other subject that they have to face throughout their lives, so that they can become lifetime learners.

Now, this is really not all that new. Education has been at the heart of America's progress for over 200 years. First of all, our Founding Fathers were highly literate people. Where would we be if Thomas Jefferson had known nothing about the great philosophers who went before him?