

200,000 more places there at the end of the last Congress—thank you, Congressman Porter—and the biggest increase in Pell grants in 20 years. We've done that. We've helped 70,000 young people work their way through college by serving their community in the AmeriCorps program.

And we did pass two things that I thought were very important for grassroots reform. One was the so-called school to work program, which helps deal with young people who aren't going to 4-year colleges but do need further education. We know now that unless you have at least 2 years of education after high school, young people this day and age are almost certain to be put in jobs where their incomes go down, not up.

The other was the Goals 2000 program, which had a simple idea. We should have a system by which school districts and States can establish very high national standards but have more flexibility school by school, district by district, to decide how to meet those standards. That's what Goals 2000 was about. So it just simply says, we at the national level will give the States some money and then the States can give it to school districts. If they will figure out—if they will, A, set high standards for themselves and then, B, figure out how they want to meet those standards and be held accountable for them.

And that's what this First in the World Consortium did. There is no better model for what we were trying to do in the entire United States of America than what you have done here. And you should be very proud of yourselves.

Now, as we look to the next 4 years, there are some things that I'd like to do in that first category, that basket of things I mentioned. I do think there are more things we need to do in the area of equal opportunity and helping deal with resource problems.

The most important thing we can do is to open the doors of college to all and to make sure that the first 2 years of college become as universal by the year 2000 as a high school diploma is today, and I think—that's clear that we know how to do that. We have proposed a \$1,500 tax credit for people for the first 2 years of college, which is the cost of a typical community college tuition in America; a \$10,000 a year tax deduction for the cost of any college tuition—I can see you adding it up now—[laughter]—and making it easier for more people to take out IRA's and then withdraw from

them, tax-free, if the money is used to pay for a college education. I think all of those things will help.

We've proposed to collapse all these Federal programs, about 70 of them that pay for various kinds of job training, and get rid of all of them, put the money in a fund, and send every unemployed or underemployed person who would be eligible for any of them a simple voucher, a skills grant that they could then take to the nearest community college or other educational institution to decide on their own what kind of training they need, which I think is a very important idea.

We have funds in there to complete our work of connecting all of our schools to the information superhighway by the year 2000, which will make it possible for the first time in history for students in the poorest or in the most remote school districts to have access to the same information other children have in the same way at the same time. It can literally revolutionize educational opportunity in a way that I believe is very important.

And finally, it's not a problem here, but I've spent a lot of time in our schools, and it's very hard to lift children up in schools that are falling down. The educational infrastructure of the country has deteriorated dramatically, number one. Number two, we have for the first time a group of young people coming in that are going to be bigger than the baby boom cohort. We have now the largest number of young people in our schools in history. I'm glad for that; it takes a big burden off us baby boomers that—[laughter]—the kids are taking over again. It also means great things for how we're going to pay for all of our retirement several years down the road. [Laughter] But in the near term, I have championed a proposal that has been spearheaded by Senator Carol Moseley-Braun that will spark a 20 percent increase in school construction and renovation that I think is very important, by having the Federal Government use limited monies to leverage down the interest rates when school districts make an extra effort to do things that have to be done in their schools. That is also important.

And finally, for the districts that need it, I also have been a great champion of the charter school program, and that is all in our budget. The mayor and I are going down to Chicago in a few moments to talk to the school board about that.