

## Remarks Announcing the Presidents' Summit for America's Future January 24, 1997

*The President.* I thank the Vice President and the First Lady for their remarks. Obviously, I am delighted to have President Bush, General Powell, and Secretary Cisneros back. Henry's only been off the payroll a day or two. [Laughter] I didn't really know if he'd come. [Laughter]

I thank so many people here who have advocated national service and citizen service of various kinds for a long time. Especially I'd like to acknowledge, in addition to Harris Wofford and Bob Goodwin, Eli Segal and Ray Chambers; Al From with the Democratic Leadership Council; Charles Moskos, the national scholar of citizen service, who was for all this years before the rest of us knew it was an issue. Thank you, sir, for all your lifetime of work devoted to the proposition that the American people can forge their own destiny and solve their own problems. We thank you.

This is an extraordinary collection of Americans who have gathered here, not only on the stage but out here in the room, to advance the cause of citizen service. Much of the work of America cannot be done by government. Much other work cannot be done by government alone. The solution must be the American people through voluntary service to others. The challenges we face today, especially those that face our children, require something of all of us, parents, religious and community groups, business, labor organizations, schools, teachers, our great national civic and service organizations, every citizen.

One of my proudest moments as President was signing the bill creating the Corporation for National Service and AmeriCorps. During the last 3 years, about 50,000 Americans have earned aid for college by serving in their communities, doing real work to address critical problems, cleaning up rivers, working with the police to make the streets safe, helping children learn to read, and doing many, many more things in every State in the country.

These AmeriCorps members and even larger numbers of Senior Service Corps and student volunteers have really helped to revive the spirit of service in America. I noticed just a few days before the Inauguration the publication of a na-

tional poll—I can mention that now and you think I have no self-interest, you see—[laughter]—the publication of a national poll that said that young people are serving in their communities in far higher percentages than just a few years ago.

I think this is a culmination of years and years of effort. When President Bush held this office, he understood that so much of what is good in America has to be done and is being done by people who are outside Washington and outside the Federal Government. And we share his hope that by holding up examples of ordinary Americans engaged in extraordinary service, by holding up those thousand points of light, they will grow by the power of their example into millions of points of light. And we thank you for that.

Citizen service belongs to no party, no ideology. It is an American idea which every American should embrace. Today I am pleased to announce that we are taking an important step to give more Americans the opportunity to fulfill that promise. On April 27th in Philadelphia, with the support and leadership of the Corporation for National Service, the Points of Light Foundation, General Colin Powell, and Secretary Henry Cisneros, President Bush and I will convene the first Presidents' summit on citizen service. Our goal is to mobilize America's citizen power in a united effort to solve our common problems, especially those that threaten our young people.

Leaders from a broad spectrum will come with commitments in hand, concrete pledges of support, and volunteers to solve their local problems. In preparation for the summit some of our most prominent corporations and service organizations have already stepped forward. Big Brothers-Big Sisters has pledged to double their mentoring relations, matching 200,000 deserving young people with caring adults through the year 2000. And they have pledged to compound their efforts by having these adult volunteers actually do other citizen service projects with the young people they mentor. They not only will be serving the young but calling on the young to serve. Lens Crafters will provide one million needy Americans, especially children,