

to deal with the new challenges. The Republicans had basically abandoned what might have been a basis for being a very successful modern party if they had essentially been like traditional northeast Republicans and modified their position. And instead, they adopted the Reagan position, which was, the Government is always the problem, is inherently bad, and is oppressing people, and what we really need to do is just to get it out of the way and everything will be fine. It seems to me that that is self-evidently untrue.

So what we tried to do was to take an approach that said that Government could not do everything, but it couldn't sit on the sidelines; and what we really should focus on is to create the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives and to build successful families and communities and to enable America to reach out to the rest of the world in a positive way. That's why we focused on an economic policy that works. That's why we supported local crime policies that work. That's why we've worked on—we've moved historic numbers of people from welfare to work.

And I think we've had a fair measure of success in meeting the new security challenges of the world beyond our borders. And after 5 years, as I said, we have the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, the lowest crime rate in 24 years, the biggest drop in welfare rolls in history. The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer. We have cleaned up record numbers of toxic waste dumps, and we're tackling the big challenges of our time. So I think we're moving in the right direction.

Now, what are we about to do in Washington? Congress is about to come back to town, and I have to give the State of the Union Address. And I will very briefly tell you what I think is still out there to be done. First of all, we have got to find a way to bring economic opportunity to the areas in this country which haven't received it. We've got to bring economic empowerment and enterprise into isolated inner-city and rural communities. And I won't bore you with the details—you may have better ideas than I do—but we're going to have an agenda to do that.

Secondly, in the area of crime, the crime rate is dropping, but the juvenile crime rate is not dropping as fast. Kids get in trouble—almost all juvenile crime is committed between 2 and 6 o'clock in the afternoon, almost 100 percent

of it. It is a very foolish thing for us to keep building prisons to put young people in to become permanent criminals as a strategy to lower the crime rate, when for much less money we could leave the schools open, give them something to say yes to and build their lives around. And so we're going to try to deal with that.

In the area of welfare reform, the fundamental issue is we've reduced the welfare rolls by 3.8 million; all the people that are left are going to be harder to place. Therefore, there needs to be more training, more child care, but also jobs that are created, if necessary, in community service work so that people aren't just cut off welfare.

The other thing we have to examine is how do we make sure that people aren't required to give up their educational programs if they're actually going to school. There's been a lot of publicity about that here in New York. And one of the things we're trying to do there is to make sure that people on welfare can qualify for work-study while they're going to college and they can work their way through school like everybody else does who has to work their way through school. So we're trying to work through that.

On the issue of balancing family and work, the most single meaningful action that I've taken as President, I think, if you took a poll, most people would probably say, "I like the Family and Medical Leave Act." Probably around 15 million people have been able to take some time off from work when a baby was born or a parent was sick.

Yesterday Hillary and I and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore announced the largest child care initiative in the history of the country, to try to make child care more affordable, more available, and of a higher quality and safer than ever before to millions more Americans.

The next big challenge we have to face is all of us around here in this room who are baby boomers—some of you are not, some of you are a little older, some of you are a little younger—but the baby boom generation, until—this generation now in the public schools is the biggest we've ever had, but until they were in the public schools, we were the largest generation. If we don't make some changes in Social Security and Medicare, when we retire we either won't be able to draw them in the way that they're now being enjoyed by seniors, or we will impose incredible tax burdens on our