

The survey also reported that children in Virginia, for example, in urban school districts—let me—I live across the river from one, from the most diverse school district in America, Fairfax County, Virginia—children from 180 different national and ethnic groups in one school district. And the survey concluded that the reason that the urban students in Virginia scored better was because they had specific, rigorous standards to which they were held and consequences for failure. So I say to you, I hope you will all support that.

Finally, let me say—in this old world we've got a lot of challenges; I just want to mention two. We need a national consensus to do something on global warming. It is real; it is significant; and what we need is an understanding that we can grow the economy and still preserve the environment. Just with the pressures that—public pressure that has been created in the last few months, look at all the new announcements that Detroit has made about cars that no one had anticipated before. We can do this. But we will pay a terrible price if we do not.

The second issue I'd like to raise is that the wonderful explosion in science and technology and information that allow kids in New York City to get on the Internet and talk to kids in Australia about school projects also mean that crazy people in New York can talk to crazy people somewhere else about how to make chemical weapons or biological weapons. You remember when we had the Oklahoma City bombing trial, the publicity came out that there was a webpage where, if you could hook into it, you could figure out how to make the bomb.

I say that simply to make the point that when you see me on behalf of the United States trying to stand up against the spread of chemical and biological weapons, or trying to devise ways to

stop the spread of disease, or more rigorous standards to preserve the quality of our food supply as we import more food and more food goes across national borders—see that as part of this larger issue. We want all the benefits of globalization, but we have to preserve the integrity and the value of our life and that of people around the world.

And since we're in New York, I'll make my last pitch. I need your support for convincing the Congress that they should support and we should pay our way in the United Nations, in the World Bank, in the International Monetary Fund, and all the other international institutions. We live in an era of interdependence, and we have richly benefited from it. We were able to do what we did in Bosnia because others would help us. And I could give you lots of other examples.

Now, why should you be here and why are you doing this? Because we believe that Government is not the enemy, but it has to be an agent of change; because we believe this is an age in which we have to form a more perfect Union by giving people the tools to make the most of their own lives, to serve in their communities, and to build a strong country; and because the evidence is, after 5 years, that this approach is right for America.

You've made it possible for it to continue, and I very much appreciate it. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. at a private residence in the Dakota apartment building. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Grossman, national chair, Democratic National Committee; luncheon hosts Craig Hatkoff and Jane Rosenthal; and Judith Hope, chair, New York State Democratic Party.

Statement on National Education Standards

January 8, 1998

This week, an independent report showed that more than half the students in our Nation's city schools are failing to master the basics in reading, math, and science—the building blocks of all the skills they will need to succeed in the

21st century. And while some city school* systems *are* making progress, all too many are clearly failing our children.

* White House correction.