

of a million dollars more than high school graduates. Each additional year of college after high school means a 10 percent increase in yearly earnings for people. If you graduate from college, you're much, much, much more likely now to get a job with a pension, with health care, with other benefits, and where the income goes up, instead of staying the same or actually declining, as against inflation.

We have learned as a people, therefore, that the more we invest in education and the higher the quality is, the faster our economy grows as a whole. In the last 2 years—one of the things I'm proudest of is not only that we're now over 14 million new jobs in the 5 years I've been privileged to be your President, with a 24-year low in unemployment, but in the last 2 years, more than half of the new jobs coming into this economy have paid above average wages. That's the good news. But the challenging news is, you can't get those jobs unless you have the requisite education.

And let me say again, this is about more than money. This is not just about money; this is about our ability to be strong as a nation. You want America to lead the world? Do you really believe we can maintain the world's strongest defense, the world's strongest economy, the world's strongest diplomatic force unless we are the world's best educated people? There is no way. Do you want us to set an example for other people about how we should live and have good values? We also have to have smart enough minds and be sophisticated enough to figure out how to handle the honest differences that we have.

We have honest differences. That's what makes life interesting. We wouldn't have to have elections if we didn't have any differences. [Laughter] We have honest differences, but we have to figure out, how do we handle our differences in ways that we grow stronger, we grow richer, we improve the quality of life, and we strengthen our values?

It is not just about money. We will not succeed in the world of the 21st century unless we dramatically improve the quality of education that all of our children get from kindergarten through high school, and unless we have larger numbers of people going on to college and succeeding, not only because you have to know more but because—well, look what's happening. Look at the Internet. How many of you young people have ever used the Internet? How many

of you have ever logged on to the Internet? Look at all these hands up.

Now, let me tell you something. Five years ago, when I became President—just 5 years ago—the Internet was still virtually the private property of research scientists. It started out as a little Government project so that research scientists could communicate with each other and share the latest data. And a young person in his twenties basically figured out that this thing could have great commercial applications, great educational potential. It was unbelievable. And all of a sudden, all these young people in their twenties were becoming multimillionaires, some of them worth hundreds of millions of dollars, figuring out how to use the Internet for education and for business purposes.

Now, it's staggering. Hundreds of thousands of new homepages are added to the Internet every month. It's probably the fastest growing communications institution in all of human history. And just 5 years ago, nobody knew what it was. I say that to make this point. The reason you need a good education is not just so when you get out of college you know what you're supposed to know; you have to be able to learn for a lifetime, and then to apply what you know. So that education is much more dynamic than it used to be. Think of the Internet. That's a good model, more and more things coming on. It's hard to keep up. You've got to keep learning about it. That's the way all work is going to be.

And that's why we're here. Now, we've worked hard to do what we could to improve our schools, to say: We ought to have high standards; we ought to push proven reforms; we ought to connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000; we ought to make sure that nobody gets out of the third grade without being able to read independently—that's what the America Reads program is all about; we ought to make sure that everybody that needs it is in a good Head Start program or other pre-school program; we ought to make sure that after school and on the weekends our young people have something to do and something to say yes to so they have good lives and don't get in trouble. Houston was a leading force in proving that works.

But then after all that is said and done, we have got to get more people to go on to college. Now, I have done my best to fulfill a commitment I made to the American people when I