

the Civil War, the President's party has only won midterm elections under Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, each in their first midterm election—and, as you heard, not since 1822, in the sixth year. And I can save you a lot of reading—it is not complicated. We showed up for work every day, and we remembered who we were working for. And we wanted power not to just have it and exercise it against anybody but just to use it for a little while to advance the American people's dreams.

It is not complicated. And we had people like you who helped us raise enough money that even though we were outspent by \$100 million, we at least had enough to get our message out. And we said, "Look, we work for you. Here's where our country is; here's where we're going; here's what we'd like to do." It was not complicated.

We're proud to be members of our party, but we believe progress should take precedence over partisanship. We believe unity should take precedence over division. We believe political power should be used with purpose to advance the lives of people only. And if you give us a little help, we will, now that the country is working again—and the economy is perhaps the best in history and the welfare rolls are the lowest in 29 years, and the crime rate is the lowest in 28 years, and we've got the lowest peacetime unemployment since 1957—now that the country is working again, we would like to look to the long-term challenges of America.

We would like to deal with the aging of America by saving Social Security and Medicare and thinking about other things so that we baby boomers don't have to burden our children and our grandchildren when we retire. We would like to look to the flowering of our children, the largest and most diverse group of schoolchildren we've ever had, and make sure that every one of them has a chance to have a world-class education.

We would like to look to the strength of our families and make sure that they have health care that is adequate, affordable, and quality health care, which is why we want this Patients' Bill of Rights. We would like to continue to grow the economy under increasingly competitive and difficult conditions. We would like to remain the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity. And we think we have the obligation to do that, which is what our efforts in the Middle East and Northern Ireland

and Bosnia and Kosovo and other places in the world are all about.

And if that's what you want us to do, we're ready to try harder, but we need a little help. That's what we said.

Now, on Tuesday night I will be given the great honor that comes to the President once a year to report on the State of the Union and then to amplify in greater detail what this agenda means and what I hope we can accomplish in a bipartisan manner in the Congress in the coming years. But when you go home tonight and you ask yourselves why you came and what you believe in, I hope—whether it was worth your time and your money—I hope you will be proud of what has happened in these last 6 years. But I hope you'll also be determined to make the most of the days ahead.

This 6-year thing is arbitrary. It gets in people's minds, gets in administrations' minds, and they think, "Oh, well, I'm 75 percent through." I think there's still 25 percent of the time left. Just a question of how you look at it. And in the rhythm of life, it seems to me that you get hired to show up every day. And I get the same daily wage now I did on the first day I was President, so it seems to me I ought to put in the same level of effort.

But if I could say in a more serious vein in closing, there are many reasons that I am a member of this party, besides the fact that my granddaddy would turn over in his grave if I weren't. [Laughter] And we could talk about that all night. But on the eve of the new millennium, when we're living in a new world economy and an increasingly new world society, when you are communicating with each other in different ways and people are living and working in different ways, when there are vast prospects for us coming together with different kinds of people, and also new threats because of our increasing openness and interconnection with the rest of the world, there are three basic things I'd like for you to remember, because I hope it says what we're about.

One is, we honestly believe that no person is better than any other and that every child in this country, without regard to race or religion or station in life or circumstance, ought to have the chance to live up to his or her God-given abilities. And the role of government should be to create the conditions and give them the tools, and give their parents the support, so that they have a chance to do it.