

why are they doing that? For the same reason that I'm going around America trying to get changes in the law and new investments and tax incentives to invest in areas and people that have been left behind, because we'll never have the opportunity we have right now, today, to give people who have been poor and forgotten a chance to be part of this free enterprise economy. If we don't do it now, we'll never get around to it—we'll never get around to it.

Let me just mention two or three more issues. We've got the most diverse group of young people in our country's history and the largest number of students. We've got the best system of college education in the world, and we have effectively opened the doors of college to everybody, although I'm going to propose some things to make it more affordable in the State of the Union. But no one believes we've done what we need to do to give every child a world-class education, kindergarten through 12th grade. Until we do that, we won't be secure in the 21st century.

The number of people over 65 is going to double in the next 30 years. I hope to be one of them. [Laughter] And I'm trying to get the Congress to take the Social Security Trust Fund out beyond the life of the baby boomers and to add to the life of Medicare and to let elderly people on Medicare who can't otherwise afford it buy insurance so they can have prescription drugs when they need them. These are big issues.

And just one more—I could mention four or five more—I want to mention one more. I had an incredible experience this week, which I hope every one of you will have at some point in your life if you have not already. I flew in very late at night into the Grand Canyon. And I spent the night in an old lodge built in 1905, with a balcony right over the edge of the Canyon. And I spent an hour in the morning watching the Sun rise over the Grand Canyon.

Thirty years ago, when I was a much younger man, I spent 2 hours crawling out on a ledge to watch the Sun set over the Grand Canyon. And it's a source of infinite humility. People ask me all the time about my legacy. It took millions of years to form the Grand Canyon; doubtless in a few thousand no one will remember that I did a lot to save it or expand it, you know. It's not about your legacy; it's about your life.

But if you go to the Grand Canyon and you watch the sunrise or the sunset and you see that it took millions upon millions of years for all these layers of rock to form and they're different colors and different shapes, so when the Sun sets you watch the light come up out of the Canyon and, when the Sun rises, you watch the light dive down into the Canyon, and it's like watching this breathtaking, constantly changing painting, there's nothing like it anywhere in the world.

And I went out there because I added a million acres to the land we're protecting, almost doubling the size of the Grand Canyon. And when we did that, our administration has now protected more land in the lower 48 States than any administration in history except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. [Applause] Thank you. You don't have to clap for that, but I like it. [Laughter]

But here's why I make this point. When I ran for office in 1992, I used as my theme song that old Fleetwood Mac song "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow." And all during the times I've been President, the good times and bad, I have hammered my Cabinet and my staff to remember why we came here. I was immensely gratified when, a couple of years ago, a scholar of the American Presidency said that we had—and this was 3½ years ago—already kept a higher percentage of our promises to the American people than the previous five administrations he'd studied. And it's not a mystery. We just sort of showed up for work every day, and no matter what else they were lobbying in, we just kept working and kept working.

The reason I think it's important you're here tonight is this: Just remember, for all the good things that have happened, what we have basically done is turn the ship of state around, got the country going in the right direction, and got it coming together.

We now have a chance to think about these big things—I mean really big things. Just think about it. We could make America the safest big country in the world. We could prove forever that you could grow the economy and improve the environment. We could move beyond our own racial and religious and ethnic conflicts and basically make a lasting peace in other parts of the world. These are things we could do. We could prove you could educate all children. We could prove you could bring free enterprise to poor people. These are things we can do.