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(NOONAN)

25755850
THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 1985 SP 969

PRESIDENT'S BACKUP COPY:
ADDRESS AT NORTHSIDE HIGH SCHOOL
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

THANK YOU, PAMELA. THANK YOU BILLY DENSMORE FOR
THAT FINE SHOW. THANK YOU, ALL OF YOU. IT'S WONDERFUL
TO BE HERE.

I GUESS I SHOULD TELL YOU HOW ALL THIS CAME ABOUT.
FOR SOME TIME I HAVE BEEN HEARING ABOUT A SCHOOL IN
ATLANTA THAT'S MADE A BIG COMEBACK. ABOUT 10 YEARS AGO
IT WAS IN ACADEMIC TROUBLE. BUT NOW THE S.A.T. SCORES
OF ITS STUDENTS KEEP GOING UP AND UP -- IN FACT,
THEY'VE BEEN GOING UP FOR 8 YEARS. AND THE SCHOOL IS
NOW RATED ONE OF THE BEST EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS IN
THE NATION.

SEVEN YEARS AGO THE SCHOOL HAD SO MUCH TROUBLE
GETTING STUDENTS INVOLVED IN STUDENT ACTIVITIES THAT
THEY HELD A BIG SCHOOL DANCE, WITH NO ADMISSION -- AND
ONLY ONE STUDENT SHOWED UP. BUT NOW SCHOOL SPIRIT HAS
RETURNED, AND STUDENTS ARE GETTING INVOLVED AGAIN, AND
THE SCHOOL HAS A PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAM THAT, I CAN
SEE FOR MYSELF, RIVALS THE T.V. SHOW "FAME."

EIGHT YEARS AGO THE SCHOOL COULD BARELY GET ANYONE TO GO OUT FOR SPORTS. BUT IN 1982 THE SCHOOL GRADUATED A YOUNG MAN NAMED SAM GRADDY, WHO HELPED AMERICA WIN THE GOLD IN THE 400-METER RELAY AT THE 1984 OLYMPICS.

I HAVE BEEN THINKING THAT THIS SCHOOL IN ATLANTA IS A KIND OF METAPHOR FOR THE WHOLE COUNTRY. BECAUSE NORTHSIDE HIGH IS BACK, AND STANDING TALL.

ONE OF THE NICEST THINGS ABOUT MY JOB IS THAT NOW AND THEN IT ALLOWS ME TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE NATION. AND SO I HAVE COME HERE TODAY TO SAY TO YOU, ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF OUR COUNTRY: WELL DONE!

AND ALLOW ME TO THANK YOU FOR THE KINDNESS WITH WHICH YOU GREETED A VERY SPECIAL LADY IN MY LIFE WHEN SHE VISITED HERE LAST OCTOBER. NANCY TOLD ME ALL ABOUT YOU. AND YOU KNOW, I HEARD SHE GOT INTO A LITTLE TROUBLE. SOMEONE ASKED HER IF SHE CAME TO ATLANTA FOR POLITICAL REASONS AND SHE SAID, "NO, I'M HERE FOR DRUGS." I CAN'T TELL YOU WHAT CONFUSION THAT CAUSED! BUT NANCY WAS VERY IMPRESSED BY WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO COMBAT DRUG ABUSE, TO GET THE WORD OUT THAT USING DRUGS IS DUMB AND DANGEROUS. AND I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT WHEN SHE CAME BACK TO THE WHITE HOUSE SHE TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL BAND, AND THE CHORUS, AND THE TROUPE OF DANCERS. AND THEN SHE SHOWED ME WHAT SHE WAS PROUDEST OF, THE PERMANENT HALL PASS. CAN I HAVE ONE TOO?

YOU MAKE US ALL VERY PROUD. AND THE MOST IMPRESSIVE THING ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO TURN AROUND NORTHSIDE HIGH IS THAT YOU DID IT. YOU, AND AN AMERICAN HERO NAMED BILL RUDOLPH -- YOU KNOW, IN SOME SCHOOLS YOU'RE TAKING A CHANCE WHEN YOU INVITE STUDENTS TO APPLAUD THEIR PRINCIPAL, BUT I KNEW YOU'D COME THROUGH. YOUR TEACHERS HELPED, YOUR FACULTY, SERIOUS AND COMMITTED TEACHERS SUCH AS RAY LAMB, WHO LAST YEAR WON A PRESIDENTIAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE TEACHING OF MATH. AND YOUR PARENTS DID IT -- YOUR PARENTS TURNED AROUND NORTHSIDE HIGH. YOU KNOW FAR BETTER THAN I HOW THEY JOINED TOGETHER TO HELP YOU GET DRUGS OUT OF NORTHSIDE. AND I'D LIKE TO MENTION ALSO "FAMILIES IN ACTION," A GROUP THAT HAS ACHIEVED TREMENDOUS RESULTS IN THE AREA OF DRUG EDUCATION. TOGETHER ALL THESE INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS HELPED CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE, AS BILL RUDOLPH PUTS IT, "EACH STUDENT MAY REACH HIS MAXIMUM LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF MUTUAL RESPECT."

YOU'RE A TRIUMPHANT EXAMPLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVE -- A TRIUMPH OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT -- AND YOU'RE PROOF THAT NO FORCE ON EARTH CAN STOP INDIVIDUALS FROM ACHIEVING GREAT GOALS WHEN THEY HAVE THE WILL AND THE HEART TO PULL TOGETHER AND WORK TOGETHER.

ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY WE ARE SEEING A MASSIVE MOVEMENT AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL WHERE THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND SCHOOLS ARE FORMING PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION. AT THE WHITE HOUSE WE HAVE ADOPTED A SCHOOL, THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. SCHOOL IN WASHINGTON. I EVEN GOT TO TAKE PART, WITH MY PEN PAL WHO'S A SECOND GRADER THERE.

REMARKABLE THINGS ARE HAPPENING EVERYWHERE. DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS WE HAVE SEEN HOW A SCHOOL IN CHICAGO CALLED PROVIDENCE ST. MEL'S PREVENTED THEIR DOORS FROM CLOSING BECAUSE OF THE PRIVATE DONATIONS THAT CAME TO THEIR AID.

AND, NOW I AM HERE TODAY AT NORTHSIDE HIGH BECAUSE THE STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND PRIVATE SECTOR GROUPS HAVE FORMED CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS TO MAKE YOUR SCHOOL STRONGER AND BETTER THAN EVER.

NOW, WHILE ALL OF YOU WERE TRYING TO FIX WHAT WAS WRONG WITH YOUR SCHOOL, WE WERE TRYING, AND STILL ARE, BACK IN WASHINGTON, TO FIX THE THINGS THAT ARE WRONG WITH AMERICA. AND YOU'VE BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL HERE I FIGURED I'D COME DOWN AND ASK FOR YOUR HELP.

WE'VE ALREADY COME A LONG WAY. JUST 5 YEARS AGO, WHEN SOME OF YOU WERE IN JUNIOR HIGH, AMERICA WAS IN BAD SHAPE -- MOSTLY BAD ECONOMIC SHAPE. RISING PRICES WERE MAKING IT HARDER FOR YOUR PARENTS TO BUY ESSENTIALS LIKE FOOD AND CLOTHING, AND UNEMPLOYMENT WAS RISING -- THERE WERE NO JOBS FOR SENIORS IN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TO GRADUATE INTO. IT WAS AS IF OPPORTUNITY HAD JUST DRIED UP, AND PEOPLE WEREN'T FEELING THE OLD HOPE AMERICANS HAD ALWAYS FELT. AND THAT WAS TERRIBLE BECAUSE HOPE WAS ALWAYS THE FUEL THAT KEPT AMERICA GOING AND KEPT OUR SOCIETY TOGETHER.

JUST A FEW YEARS LATER, EVERYTHING'S CHANGED. YOU AND YOUR PARENTS ARE FINALLY GETTING A BREATHER FROM INFLATION -- AND IF YOU GRADUATE AND GO INTO THE WORK FORCE IN JUNE THERE WILL BE JOBS WAITING FOR YOU. HOPE HAS RETURNED AND AMERICA'S WORKING AGAIN.

NOW, YOU KNOW HOW ALL THIS CAME ABOUT, HOW WE CUT TAX RATES AND TRIMMED FEDERAL SPENDING AND GOT INTEREST RATES DOWN. BUT WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT IS WHAT INSPIRED US TO DO THESE THINGS. WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT IS THE PHILOSOPHY THAT GUIDED US.

THE WHOLE THING CAN BE BOILED DOWN TO A FEW WORDS: FREEDOM, FREEDOM, AND MORE FREEDOM. IT'S A PHILOSOPHY THAT ISN'T LIMITED TO GUIDING GOVERNMENT POLICY -- IT'S A PHILOSOPHY YOU CAN LIVE BY. IN FACT, I HOPE YOU DO.

AS YOU KNOW, LAST WEEK I UNVEILED OUR PROPOSAL TO MAKE THE FEDERAL TAX SYSTEM FAIRER, CLEARER, AND LESS BURDENSOME FOR ALL AMERICANS. NOW, SOMEONE MIGHT SAY IT'S ODD TO TALK ABOUT TAX POLICY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR TEENS, BUT I DON'T THINK SO. YOU NOT ONLY UNDERSTAND WHAT TAXES ARE AND WHAT EFFECT THEY HAVE ON THE AVERAGE PERSON'S LIFE -- BUT IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU WILL PRETTY SOON WHEN YOU GET YOUR FIRST JOB. I KNOW SOME OF YOU ALREADY HAVE PART-TIME JOBS, AND I KNOW YOU KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE PART OF THE CHECK THAT SHOWS WHAT UNCLE SAM IS TAKING OUT.

WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO DO IS CHANGE SOME OF THOSE NUMBERS. WE WANT THE PART OF YOUR CHECK THAT SHOWS FEDERAL WITHHOLDING TO HAVE FEWER DIGITS ON IT. AND WE WANT THE PART THAT SHOWS YOUR SALARY TO HAVE MORE DIGITS ON IT. WE'RE TRYING TO TAKE LESS MONEY FROM YOU AND LESS FROM YOUR PARENTS.

AND WHATEVER YOU, AND THEY, DO WITH THIS ADDITIONAL MONEY WILL NOT ONLY HELP YOU, IT WILL HELP THE WHOLE COUNTRY BY MAKING OUR ENTIRE ECONOMY STRONGER.

MAYBE YOU'LL TAKE SOME OF THE MONEY AND PUT IT IN A BANK. FINE -- YOU'LL EARN INTEREST ON YOUR SAVINGS, AND YOU'LL ALSO MAKE MORE MONEY AVAILABLE FOR OTHERS TO BORROW TO EXPAND THEIR BUSINESS OR IMPROVE THEIR HOME.

MAYBE YOU'LL SPEND IT, AND THAT'S FINE TOO --
ALTHOUGH I HOPE YOU DON'T SPEND IT ALL -- BUT WHAT YOU
SPEND WILL INCREASE DEMAND FOR VARIOUS PRODUCTS, AND
THAT WILL HELP CREATE JOBS.

BUT WHATEVER YOU DO WITH IT, YOU'LL BE THE ONE
WHO'S DOING THE DOING. YOU'LL MAKE THE DECISIONS,
YOU'LL HAVE THE AUTONOMY -- AND THAT'S WHAT FREEDOM IS.

WHEN TAXES ARE LOWERED, ECONOMIC GROWTH FOLLOWS --
AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IS GOOD FOR JUST ABOUT EVERYONE,
ESPECIALLY THE POOR. IT GIVES THEM A LADDER THEY CAN
USE TO CLIMB OUT OF POVERTY. AND FOR THOSE WHO AREN'T
POOR BUT WHO ARE BY NO MEANS RICH -- AND THAT'S MOST OF
THE PEOPLE IN AMERICA -- ECONOMIC GROWTH GIVES THEM
OPTIONS THEY NEVER HAD BEFORE. WHEN YOU AND YOUR
PARENTS AND YOUR FRIENDS ARE ALLOWED TO KEEP MORE OF
THE FRUITS OF YOUR LABORS, A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF OPTIONS
WILL OPEN UP FOR YOU.

YOU'LL BE BETTER SITUATED TO PAY FOR COLLEGE. YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SAVE AND POOL YOUR MONEY WITH FRIENDS, AND MAYBE EVEN START A SMALL, LOCAL BUSINESS. I KNEW A FELLOW WHO ONCE BOUGHT INTO A LITTLE HAMBURGER STAND OUT WEST. HE WAS JUST A REGULAR GUY, BUT HE WORKED HARD AND ADVERTISED AND THE LITTLE STAND PROSPERED. YOU MAY HAVE HEARD OF IT. IT WAS CALLED McDONALD'S. I WAS THINKING ABOUT RAY KROC RECENTLY, AND HOW THE JINGLE THAT HE USED APPLIES TO OUR TAX PROGRAM: "YOU DESERVE A BREAK TODAY." AND TOMORROW TOO, AND FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.

WE'RE TRYING TO GIVE A BREAK -- A MUCH-DESERVED, LONG-OVERDUE BREAK -- TO THE AMERICAN FAMILY. I'LL TELL YOU HOW STRANGE AMERICA'S CURRENT TAX LAWS ARE -- THEY ALLOW A DEDUCTION OF ONLY SLIGHTLY MORE THAN \$1,000 FOR EVERY PERSON IN YOUR FAMILY. IF YOU THINK ABOUT WHAT IT COSTS FOR YOUR PARENTS TO PUT FOOD ON THE TABLE AND BUY YOU EVERYTHING FROM BOOKS TO BRACES, YOU KNOW THAT \$1,000 DOESN'T EVEN MAKE A DENT IN IT. WE'RE GOING TO VIRTUALLY DOUBLE THAT EXEMPTION TO \$2,000, WITH INCREASES IF INFLATION OCCURS. THAT'S STILL NOT ENOUGH, BUT IT WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARD ENCOURAGING FAMILIES AGAIN AND GIVING YOUR PARENTS THE BREAK THEY DESERVE.

WE'RE GOING TO CLOSE THE UNPRODUCTIVE TAX LOOPHOLES THAT HAVE ALLOWED SOME OF THE TRULY WEALTHY TO AVOID PAYING THEIR FAIR SHARE. IN THEORY SOME OF THOSE LOOPHOLES WERE UNDERSTANDABLE, BUT IN PRACTICE THEY SOMETIMES MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR MILLIONAIRES TO PAY NOTHING -- WHILE A BUS DRIVER WAS PAYING 10 PERCENT OF HIS SALARY. THAT'S CRAZY. IT'S TOTALLY UNFAIR. IT'S TIME WE STOPPED IT.

THE WAY I SEE IT, IF OUR CURRENT TAX STRUCTURE WERE A T.V. SHOW, IT WOULD EITHER BE "FOUL-UPS, BLEEPs AND BLUNDERS" OR "GIMME A BREAK." IF IT WERE A RECORD ALBUM, IT WOULD BE "GIMME SHELTER" -- IF IT WERE A MOVIE, IT WOULD BE "REVENGE OF THE NERDS." OR MAYBE "TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN." AND IF THE I.R.S. EVER WANTS A THEME SONG, MAYBE THEY'LL GET STING TO DO, "EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE, EVERY MOVE YOU MAKE, I'LL BE WATCHING YOU!"

WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO MOVE AGAINST IS INSTITUTIONALIZED UNFAIRNESS. WE WANT TO SEE THAT EVERYONE PAYS THEIR FAIR SHARE AND NO ONE GETS A FREE RIDE. OUR REASONS? IT'S GOOD FOR SOCIETY WHEN WE ALL KNOW THAT NO ONE IS MANIPULATING THE SYSTEM TO THEIR ADVANTAGE BECAUSE THEY'RE RICH AND POWERFUL. BUT IT'S ALSO GOOD FOR SOCIETY WHEN EVERYONE PAYS SOMETHING, THAT EVERYONE MAKES A CONTRIBUTION. AFTER ALL, WE'RE ALL CITIZENS, EQUAL IN THE EYES OF THE LAW AND EQUAL IN THE EYES OF GOD.

YOU'RE GIVEN A LOT OF BENEFITS WHEN YOU'RE BORN IN THE U.S.A. -- BUT YOU'RE GIVEN A RESPONSIBILITY TOO. A RESPONSIBILITY TO DO YOUR PART AND BECOME A CONTRIBUTING MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY AND AN EQUAL PARTNER IN AMERICA, INC. WHEN YOU PAY YOUR TAXES YOU BUY YOUR SHARES -- AND EVERY YEAR YOU GET TO VOTE ON WHO SHOULD BE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

YOU'LL BE HEARING MORE ABOUT OUR TAX PROPOSALS OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. A GREAT DEBATE HAS BEGUN, AND THERE WILL BE MUCH TALK PRO AND CON AND THAT'S GOOD, THAT'S WHAT AMERICA IS ABOUT.

BUT THE HEARTENING THING IS THAT NO ONE IN WASHINGTON IS STANDING UP AND SAYING: LEAVE THE TAX SYSTEM AS IT IS, IT'S WONDERFUL, WE LOVE IT! JUST ABOUT EVERYONE ADMITS IT HAS TO BE CHANGED -- THE ONLY DISAGREEMENTS NOW ARE OVER THE SPECIFICS. AND NO ONE, OR JUST ABOUT NO ONE, IS SAYING: WE OUGHT TO RAISE TAXES AND TAKE MORE OF THE PEOPLE'S MONEY! ACTUALLY, I THINK IT WOULD BE FUN IF SOME POLITICIAN WOULD SAY THAT, I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYONE RUN OUT OF TOWN ON A RAIL IN YEARS.

I'M GOING TO LEAVE YOU TODAY WITH SOME QUESTIONS THAT I HOPE YOU'LL THINK ABOUT. BUT I NEED YOU TO ANSWER THEM.

TELL ME, DO YOU THINK YOUR HARDWORKING PARENTS OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO START HOLDING ON TO MORE OF THEIR PAYCHECKS, OR LESS?

DO YOU THINK THE MILLIONAIRE OUGHT TO PAY MORE IN TAXES THAN THE BUS DRIVER, OR LESS?

DO YOU THINK AMERICA NEEDS MORE ECONOMIC GROWTH, OR LESS?

DO YOU THINK WE NEED MORE JOBS CREATED AND MORE BUSINESSES STARTED, OR LESS?

WELL, IF, LIKE YOUNG OLIVER TWIST, YOU HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE ANSWER IS "MORE," THEN I ASK FOR YOUR HELP. YOU'RE THE FUTURE, YOU'LL SOON HAVE THE VOTE, AND YOU ALREADY HAVE A VOICE. MAKE IT HEARD. WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OR TO YOUR CONGRESSWOMAN OR CONGRESSMAN, TALK TO YOUR PARENTS AND THE NEIGHBORS, GET ALL THE FACTS. AND IF YOU CAN HELP US, DO.

AFTER I MADE MY SPEECH THE OTHER NIGHT WE RECEIVED HUNDREDS OF PHONE CALLS AND TELEGRAMS, AND MORE THAN NINE OUT OF TEN SUPPORTED OUR IDEAS TO CHANGE THE TAX SYSTEM. AND A LOT OF THOSE TELEGRAMS BORE JUST THREE WORDS. THEY SAID, "GO FOR IT."

NOT A BAD WAY OF EXPRESSING OUR HOPES FOR YOU. GO FOR IT, REACH THOSE HEIGHTS, EXCEL, PUSH YOURSELF TO THE LIMITS, STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE. ENJOY YOUR FREEDOM, BREATHE IT IN, USE IT TO CREATE THE MOST IMPORTANT AND MOVING THING A MAN OR WOMAN CAN CREATE: A DECENT AND MEANINGFUL LIFE.

I LOOK AT ALL OF YOU AND I THINK: YOU'RE FREE TO BE ANYTHING, YOU'RE FREE TO BE WHATEVER YOU WANT TO BE WITH NO ONE AND NOTHING STOPPING YOU. IN A FREE SOCIETY YOU'RE FREE TO INVENT YOURSELF -- TO TURN YOURSELF INTO A GREAT TEACHER, A RACE CAR DRIVER, A MINISTER OR MOVIE STAR, OR A GROWER AND SELLER OF FLOWERS. YOU CAN BE ANYTHING -- IT'S YOUR INVENTION -- AND THERE'S NOTHING TO STOP YOU.

WE WANT AN AMERICA THAT'S ECONOMICALLY STRONG AND ECONOMICALLY FREE. BUT, A CAUTION HERE. THAT'S THE NICE THING ABOUT GETTING OLDER, YOU GET TO CAUTION PEOPLE. WE WANT TO REMEMBER THAT WHILE THE CREATION OF WEALTH IS GOOD -- WEALTH, AFTER ALL, GENERATES JOBS AND PROSPERITY -- WE MUST NOT LET THE CREATION OF WEALTH BECOME A PREOCCUPATION WITH MATERIAL THINGS.

WE'VE MADE SO MUCH ECONOMIC PROGRESS IN OUR COUNTRY, BUT IT WILL MEAN VERY LITTLE IF YOUR CHILDREN LOOK BACK AT YOUR DAYS AS A TIME OF MATERIALISM AND SELFISHNESS AND LOOKING OUT FOR NUMBER ONE. THE PEOPLE YOU'RE SITTING WITH RIGHT NOW, THEY'RE YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS. SOMEDAY YOU'LL HAVE A HOME OR AN APARTMENT AND YOUR NEIGHBORS WILL BE YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS. AND IT'S UP TO US, AS MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY, TO TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER AND LOVE EACH OTHER.

THERE'S AN OLD AMERICAN TRADITION CALLED HOUSE-RAISING -- THE PIONEERS OUT WEST WOULD GET TOGETHER AND BUILD EACH OTHER'S HOUSES. THAT WAS LONG AGO. BUT IT'S STILL GOING ON. EVERY TIME SOMEONE HELPS A LONELY OLD MAN IN A SHELTER FOR THE POOR, THAT'S A HOUSE-RAISING. EVERY TIME SOMEONE VOLUNTEERS THEIR TIME OR MONEY TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE LOCAL LIBRARY, THAT'S A HOUSE-RAISING. EVERY TIME A COMMUNITY GETS TOGETHER AND SAYS SOMETHING LIKE, "WE'RE GOING TO TURN NORTHSIDE HIGH INTO ONE OF THE GREATEST SCHOOLS IN GEORGIA" -- THAT'S A HOUSE-RAISING.

I WISH YOU A NATION OF STRENGTH AND WEALTH AND
POWER -- BUT MORE THAN THAT, I WISH YOU A NATION WHERE
THE HOUSE-RAISING CONTINUES. AND SOMEHOW, LOOKING OUT
AT ALL OF YOU, I SUSPECT WE HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY
ABOUT. I HAVE THIS FEELING THE HELPING AND
HOUSE-RAISING WILL CONTINUE.

THANK YOU, ALL OF YOU, FOR THIS WONDERFUL DAY.
GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

#

The President has seen _____
(Noonan/BE)
May 31, 1985
6:30 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: NORTHSIDE HIGH SCHOOL
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 1985

BSZ

Thank you, Pamela. Thank you, all of you. It's wonderful to be here.

I guess I should tell you how all this came about. For some time I have been hearing about a school in Atlanta that's made a big comeback. About 10 years ago it was in academic trouble. But now the S.A.T. scores of its students keep going up and up -- in fact, they've been going up for 8 years. And the school is now rated one of the best educational establishments in the Nation.

Seven years ago the school had so much trouble getting students involved in student activities that they held a big school dance, with no admission -- and only one student showed up. But now school spirit has returned, and students are getting involved again, and the school has a performing arts program that, I am reliably told, rivals the T.V. show "Fame."

Eight years ago the school could barely get anyone to go out for sports. But in 1982 the school graduated a young man named Sam Graddy, who helped America win the gold in the 400-meter relay at the 1984 Olympics.

I have been thinking that this school in Atlanta is a kind of metaphor for the whole country. Because Northside High is back, and standing tall.

One of the nicest things about my job is that now and then it allows me to speak on behalf of the entire Nation. And so I

have come here today to say to you, on behalf of the people of our country: Well done!

And allow me to thank you for the kindness with which you greeted a very special lady in my life when she visited here last October. Nancy told me all about you. And you know, I heard she got into a little trouble. Someone asked her if she came to Atlanta for political reasons and she said, "No, I'm here for drugs." I can't tell you what confusion that caused! But Nancy was very impressed by what you have done to combat drug abuse, to get the word out that using drugs is dumb and dangerous. And I want you to know that when she came back to the White House she told me about your school band, and the chorus, and the troupe of dancers. And then she showed me what she was proudest of, the permanent hall pass. Can I have one too?

You make us all very proud. And the most impressive thing about what you've done to turn around Northside High is that you did it. You, and an American hero named Bill Rudolph -- you know, in some schools you're taking a chance when you invite students to applaud their principal, but I knew you'd come through. Your teachers helped, your faculty, serious and committed teachers such as Ray Lamb, who last year won a Presidential Award for Excellence in the teaching of Math. And your parents did it -- your parents turned around Northside High. You know far better than I how they joined together to help you get drugs out of Northside; you know how they helped create an environment where, as Bill Rudolph puts it, "each student may

reach his maximum level of achievement in an environment of mutual respect."

You're a triumphant example of private sector initiative -- a triumph of community spirit -- and you're proof that no force on Earth can stop individuals from achieving great goals when they have the will and the heart to pull together and work together.

All around the country we are seeing a massive movement at the grassroots level where the private sector and schools are forming Partnerships in Education. At the White House we have adopted a school, The Martin Luther King, Jr. school in Washington. I even got to take part, with my pen pal who's a second grader there.

Remarkable things are happening everywhere. During the last few years we have seen how a school in Chicago called Providence St. Mel's prevented their doors from closing because of the private donations that came to their aid.

And, now I am here today at Northside High because the students, faculty, and private sector groups have formed creative partnerships to make your school stronger and better than ever.

Now, while all of you were trying to fix what was wrong with your school, we were trying, and still are, back in Washington, to fix the things that are wrong with America. And you've been so successful here I figured I'd come down and ask for your help.

We've already come a long way. Just 5 years ago, when ~~a lot~~ ^{some} of you were in junior high, America was in bad shape -- mostly bad economic shape. Rising prices were making it harder for your

parents to buy essentials like food and clothing. And unemployment was rising -- there were no jobs for seniors in high school and college to graduate into. It was as if opportunity had just dried up, and people weren't feeling the old hope Americans had always felt. And that was terrible because hope was always the fuel that kept America going and kept our society together.

Just a few years later, everything's changed. You and your parents are finally getting a breather from inflation -- and if you graduate and go into the work force in June there will be jobs waiting for you. Hope has returned and America's working again.

Now, you know how all this came about, how we cut tax rates and trimmed Federal spending and got interest rates down. But what's really important is what inspired us to do these things. What's really important is the philosophy that guided us.

The whole thing can be boiled down to a few words: freedom, freedom, and more freedom. It's a philosophy that isn't limited to guiding Government policy -- it's a philosophy you can live by. In fact, I hope you do.

As you know, last week I unveiled our proposal to make the Federal tax system fairer, clearer, and less burdensome for all Americans. Now, someone might say it's odd to talk about tax policy with young people in their teens, but I don't think so. You not only understand what taxes are and what effect they have on the average person's life -- but if you don't understand you ^{will} ~~will~~ understand pretty soon when you get your first job. I

know some of you already have part-time jobs, and I know you keep your eye on the part of the check that shows what Uncle Sam is taking out.

What we're trying to do is change some of those numbers. We want the part of your check that shows Federal withholding to have fewer digits on it. And we want the part that shows your salary to have more digits on it. We're trying to take less money from you and less from your parents.

And whatever you, and they, do with this additional money will not only help you, it will help the whole country by making our entire economy stronger. Maybe you'll take some of the money and put it in a bank. Fine -- you'll earn interest on your savings, and you'll also make more money available for others to borrow to expand their business or improve their home. Maybe you'll spend it, and that's fine too -- although I hope you don't spend it all -- but what you spend will increase demand for various products, and that will help create jobs. But whatever you do with it, you'll be the one who's doing the doing. You'll make the decisions, you'll have the autonomy -- and that's what freedom is.

When taxes are lowered, economic growth follows -- and economic growth is good for just about everyone, especially the poor. It gives them a ladder they can use to climb out of poverty. And for those who aren't poor but who are by no means rich -- and that's most of the people in America -- economic growth gives them options they never had before. When you and your parents and your friends are allowed to keep more of the

fruits of your labors, a whole new world of options will open up for you.

You'll be better situated to pay for college. You'll be able to save and pool your money with friends, and maybe even start a small, local business. I knew a fellow who once bought into a little hamburger stand out West. He was just a regular guy, but he worked hard and advertised and the little stand prospered. You may have heard of it. It was called McDonald's. I was thinking about Ray Kroc recently, and how the jingle that he used applies to our tax program: "You deserve a break today." And tomorrow too, and for the rest of your life.

We're trying to give a break -- a much-deserved, long-overdue break -- to the American family. I'll tell you how strange America's current tax laws are -- they allow a deduction of only slightly more than \$1,000 for every person in your family. If you think about what it costs for your parents to put food on the table and buy you everything from books to braces, you know that \$1,000 doesn't even make a dent in it. We're going to virtually double that exemption to \$2,000, with increases if inflation occurs. That's still not enough, but it will go a long way toward encouraging families again and giving your parents the break they deserve.

We're going to close the unproductive tax loopholes that have allowed ^{SOME OF} the truly wealthy to avoid paying their fair share. In theory some of those loopholes were understandable, but in practice they sometimes made it possible for millionaires to pay nothing -- while a bus driver was paying 10 percent of his

salary. That's crazy. It's totally unfair. It's time we stopped it.

The way I see it, if our current tax structure were a T.V. show, it would either be "Foul-Ups, Bleeps and Blunders" or "Gimme A Break." If it were a record album, it would be "Gimme Shelter" -- if it were a movie, it would be [~~Mr. President, please choose from: "Gone With The Wind," "Revenge of the Nerds," "Take the Money and Run," "Terminator," "Risky Business," or any movie you'd prefer.~~] -- and if the I.R.S. ever wants a theme song, maybe they'll get Sting to do, "Every breath you take, every move you make, I'll be watching you!"

Nancy told me about Sting. She was teaching me how to break dance...

What we're trying to move against is Institutionalized Unfairness. We want to see that everyone pays their fair share and no one gets a free ride. Our reasons? It's good for society when we all know that no one is manipulating the system to their advantage because they're rich and powerful. But it's also good for society when everyone pays something, that everyone makes a contribution. After all, we're all citizens, equal in the eyes of the law and equal in the eyes of God. You're given a lot of benefits when you're born in the U.S.A. -- but you're given a responsibility too. A responsibility to do your part and become a contributing member of the American family and an equal partner in America, Inc. When you pay your taxes you buy your shares -- and every year you get to vote on who should be on the Board of Directors.

You'll be hearing more about our tax proposals over the next few weeks. A great debate has begun, and there will be much talk pro and con and that's good, that's what America is about.

But the heartening thing is that no one in Washington is standing up and saying: leave the tax system as it is, it's wonderful, we love it! Just about everyone admits it has to be changed -- the only disagreements now are over the specifics. And no one, or just about no one, is saying: we ought to raise taxes and take more of the people's money! Actually, I think it would be fun if some politician would say that, ~~as~~ I haven't seen anyone run out of town on a rail in years.

I'm going to leave you today with some questions that I hope you'll think about. But I need you to answer them.

Tell me, do you think your hardworking parents ought to be able to start holding on to more of their paychecks, or less?

Do you think the millionaire ought to pay more in taxes than the bus driver, or less?

Do you think America needs more economic growth, or less?

Do you think we need more jobs created and more businesses started, or less?

Well, if, like young Oliver Twist, you have concluded that the answer is "More," then I ask for your help. You're the future, you'll soon have the vote, and you already have a voice. Make it heard. Write a letter to the editor or to your Congresswoman or Congressman, talk to your parents and the neighbors, get all the facts. And if you can help us, do.

After I made my speech the other night we received hundreds of phone calls and telegrams, and more than nine out of ten supported our ideas to change the tax system. And a lot of those telegrams bore just three words. They said, "Go for it."

Not a bad way of expressing our hopes for you. Go for it, reach those heights, excel, push yourself to the limits, strive for excellence. Enjoy your freedom, breathe it in, use it to create the most important and moving thing a man or woman can create: a decent and meaningful life.

I look at all of you and I think: you're free to be anything, you're free to be whatever you want to be with no one and nothing stopping you. In a free society you're free to invent yourself -- to turn yourself into a great teacher, a race car driver, a minister or movie star, or a grower and seller of flowers. You can be anything -- it's your invention -- and there's nothing to stop you.

We want an America that's economically strong and economically free. But, a caution here. That's the nice thing about getting older, you get to caution people. We want to remember that while the creation of wealth is good -- "wealth," after all, is a word that means someone who doesn't have a job is going to get one soon -- we want to remember not to let the creation of wealth become a preoccupation with material things.

We've made so much economic progress in our country, but it will mean very little if your children look back at your days as a time of materialism and selfishness and looking out for number one. The people you're sitting with right now, they're your

brothers and sisters. Someday you'll have a home or an apartment and your neighbors will be your brothers and sisters. And it's up to us, as members of the human family, as brothers and sisters in the American family, to take care of each other and love each other.

There's an old American tradition called house-raising -- the pioneers out West would get together and build each other's houses. That was long ago. But it's still going on. Every time someone helps a lonely old man in a shelter for the poor, that's a house-raising. Every time someone volunteers their time or money to raise funds for the local library, that's a house-raising. Every time a community gets together and says something like, "We're going to turn Northside High into one of the greatest schools in Georgia" -- that's a house-raising.

I wish you a Nation of strength and wealth and power -- but more than that, I wish you a Nation where the house-raising continues. And somehow, looking out at all of you, I suspect we have nothing to worry about. I have this feeling the helping and house-raising will continue.

Thank you, all of you, for this wonderful day. God bless you all.