

Clinton's economic policy

From "Putting People First: A National Economic Strategy for America," by Bill Clinton:

... My strategy puts people first by investing more than \$50 billion each year over the next four years to put America back to work—the most dramatic economic growth program since World War II. . . .

To pay for these investments and reduce our national deficit, I will save nearly \$300 billion by cutting spending, closing corporate tax loopholes, requiring the very wealthy to pay their fair share of taxes, and implementing rigorous health care cost controls. My plan will cut the deficit in half within four years, and assure that the deficit continues to fall each year after that. . . .

To create millions of high-wage jobs and smooth our transition from a defense- to a commercial-based economy, we will rebuild America and develop the world's best communication, transportation and environmental systems. As a prominent part of our commitment to put people first, we will create a Rebuild America Fund, with a \$20 billion federal investment in each year for four years, leveraged with state, local, private sector and pension fund contributions. User fees such as road tolls and solid waste disposal charges will help guarantee these investments. . . .

We will focus on four critical areas:

- Transportation, including renovation of our country's roads, bridges, and railroads; creation of a high-speed rail network linking our major cities and commercial hubs. . . .

- A national information network to link every home, business, lab, classroom, and library by the year 2015. . . .

- Environmental technology to create the world's most advanced systems to recycle, treat toxic waste, and clean our air and water. Funds will be directed to the development of new, clean, efficient energy sources.

- Defense conversion to ensure that the communities and millions of talented workers that won the Cold War don't get left out in the cold. Many of the skills and technologies required to rebuild America are similar to those now used in our defense industries. We will encourage companies that bid on projects to rebuild America to contract work to, or purchase, existing defense facilities; order the Pentagon to conduct a national defense jobs inventory to assist displace workers; and provide special conversion loans and grants to small business contractors.

Investing in communities

While America's great cities fall into disrepair, the Republicans in Washington continue to ignore their fate. Private enterprise has abandoned our cities, leaving our young people with few job prospects and declining hopes. To restore urban economic vitality and bring back high-paying jobs to our cities, I will: . . .

- Fight crime by putting 100,000 new police officers on the streets. We will create a National Police Corps and offer unemployed veterans and active military personnel a chance to become law enforcement officers here at home. We will also expand community policing, fund more drug treatment, and establish community boot camps to discipline first-time non-violent offenders.

- Create urban enterprise zones in stagnant inner cities, but only for companies willing to take responsibility. Business taxes and federal regulations will be minimized to provide incentives to set up shop. In return, companies will have to make jobs for local residents a top priority. . . .

Opening up world markets

... We will move aggressively to open foreign markets to quality American goods and services. We will urge our trading partners in Europe and the Pacific Rim to abandon unfair trade subsidies in key sectors like shipbuilding and aerospace—and act swiftly if they fail to respond. We will:

- Pass a stronger, sharper "Super 301" trade bill. If other nations refuse to play by our trade rules, we'll play by theirs.

- Seek more open markets for American products by negotiating a free trade agreement with Mexico that ensures a more level playing field and protects basic worker rights and environmental standards.

- Create an Economic Security Council, similar in status to the National Security Council, with responsibility for coordinating America's international economic policy. . . .

Rewarding work and families

Putting our people first means honoring and rewarding those who work hard and play by the rules. It means recognizing that government doesn't raise children—people do. It means that we must reward work, demand responsibility, and end welfare as we know it. . . .

In the 1980s the Republicans once again used welfare as a wedge to divide Americans against each other. . . .

My national economic strategy will strengthen families and empower all Americans to work. It will break the cycle of dependency and end welfare as we know it. It includes: . . .

- **Welfare-to-work.** We will scrap the current welfare system and make welfare a second chance, not a way of life. We will empower people on welfare with the education, training, and child care they need for up to two years so they can break the cycle of dependency. After that, those who can work will have to go to work, either by taking a job in the private sector or through community service.

Quality, affordable health care

The American health care system costs too much and does not work. . . .

My health care plan is simple in concept but revolutionary in scope. . . . The main elements include:

- **National spending caps.** The cost of health care must not be allowed to rise faster than the average American's income. I will scrap the Health Care Financing Administration and replace it with a health standards board—made up of consumers, providers, business, labor, and government—that will establish annual health budget targets and outline a core benefits package. . . .

- **Universal coverage.** Affordable, quality health care will be a right, not a privilege. Under my plan, employers and employees will either purchase private insurance or opt to buy into a high-quality public program. Every American not covered by an employer will receive the core benefits program set by the health standards board.

- **Managed care networks.** Consumers will be able to select from among a variety of local health networks, made up of insurers, hospitals, clinics, and doctors. The networks will receive a fixed amount of money for each consumer, giving them the necessary incentive to control costs.

A revolution in government

. . . I will take the following steps: . . .

- **Cuts in administrative waste.** I will require federal managers and workers to achieve 3% across-the-board administrative savings in every federal agency.

- **Cut wasteful government spending programs.** To get rid of spending programs that no longer serve their purpose, I will eliminate taxpayer subsidies for narrow special interests, reform defense procurement and foreign aid, and slash boondoggle projects.

- **Line item veto.** To eliminate pork-barrel projects and cut government waste, I will ask Congress to give me the line item veto. . . .

'Equity in sacrifice'

From former Texas Rep. Barbara Jordan's keynote speech to the Democratic Convention on July 13:

The idea that America today will be better tomorrow has become destabilized. It has become destabilized because of the recession and the sluggishness of the economy. Jobs lost have become permanent unemployment rather than cyclical unemployment. Public policymakers are held in low regard. Mistrust abounds.

In this kind of environment, is it understandable that

change would become the watchword of this time. What is the catalyst which will bring about the change we are all talking about? I say that catalyst is the Democratic Party and our nominee for President.

We are not strangers to change. Twenty years ago we changed the whole tone of the nation after Watergate abuses. We did that, 20 years ago. We know how to change. We have been the instrument of change in the past. We know what needs to be done. We know how to do it. We know that we can impact policies which affect education, human rights, civil rights, economic and social opportunity, and the environment. These are policies which are embedded in the soul of the Democratic Party. And embedded in our soul. They will not disappear easily.

We as a party will do nothing to erode our essence. We will not. But there are some things which ought to change. We need to change them. But the fact that we are going to change things, should not cause any apprehension in our minds, because the Democratic Party is alive and well. It is alive and well. We will change in order to satisfy the present, in order to satisfy the future, but we will not die. We will change, but we will not die.

From what to what? Why not change from a party with a reputation of "tax and spend" to one with a reputation of investment and growth? Change. Change. A growth economy is a must. We can grow the economy and sustain an improved environment at the same time. . . . Change. We can change the direction of America's economic engine and become competitive again. We can make that change and become proud of the country that we are. . . .

We must change that deleterious environment of the '80s, that environment which was characterized by greed and hatred and selfishness and mega-mergers and debt overhang, change it to what? Change that environment of the '80s to an environment which is characterized by a devotion to the public interest, public service, tolerance, and love.

We must frankly acknowledge our complicity in the creation of the unconscionable budget deficit—acknowledge our complicity—and recognize, painful though it may be, that in order to seriously address the budget deficit, we must address the question of entitlements also. That's not easy. That's not easy. But we have to do it. We have to do it because the idea of justice between generations, that idea mandates that the baby boomers—that's our ticket—are entitled to a secure future. They are.

However, if we are going to ask those who receive benefits to sacrifice, there must be equity in sacrifice. Equity in sacrifice. That idea says that we will sacrifice for growth, but that everybody must join in the sacrifice, not just a few. Equity in sacrifice means that all will sacrifice equally. Equally. Equally. That is, the person who is retired on a fixed income, the day laborer, the corporate executive, the college professor, the member of Congress—all must sacrifice for equity. . . .