



Fighting for the Forgotten Middle Class

Excerpts from recent speeches by Governor Bill Clinton

After 12 years of Reagan-Bush, the forgotten middle class is discovering that the reward for 12 years of sacrifice and hard work is more sacrifice and more hard times: They've paid higher taxes on lower incomes for service cuts, while the rich got tax cuts, while poverty increased, and the President and Congress got pay raises and health insurance.

These people are the backbone of the country, the ones who do the work and pay the taxes and send their children off to war. They are the real victims of the Reagan Revolution, the Bush Succession, and this awful national recession.

During this administration, the economy has grown more slowly and fewer jobs have been created than in any administration since World War II. People who have jobs are working longer hours for less money; people who don't are looking harder to find less. Middle class people are paying more for health care, housing, education, and taxes, when government services have been cut.

For 12 years, the forgotten middle class watched their economic interests ignored and their values run into the ground. Nothing illustrates this more clearly, in the 1980s, than the fact that charitable giving by middle-class families went up as their incomes went down, while charitable giving by the wealthiest Americans went down as their incomes went up. Responsibility went unrewarded and so did hard work. It's no wonder so many kids growing up on the street think it makes more sense to join a gang and deal drugs than to stay in school and go to work. The fast buck was glorified from Wall Street to Main Street to Mean Street.

This is not just a campaign. This is a crusade to restore the forgotten middle class, give the power back to ordinary people, and recapture the American Dream. It is a crusade not just for economic renewal, but for social and spiritual renewal as well. It is a crusade to build a new economic order of empowerment and opportunity that will preserve our social order and make it possible for our country once again to make the American Dream live at home and to be strong enough to triumph abroad.

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