



## A New Covenant for America

### Excerpts from speeches by Bill Clinton

To turn America around, we need a new approach founded on our most sacred principles as a nation, with a vision for the future. We need a New Covenant, a solemn agreement between the people and their government, to provide opportunity for everybody, inspire responsibility throughout our society, and restore a sense of community to this great nation. A New Covenant to take government back from the powerful interests and the bureaucracy, and give this country back to ordinary people.

More than two hundred years ago, the founders outlined our first social compact between government and the people, not just between lords and kings. More than a century ago, Abraham Lincoln gave his life to maintain the Union the compact created. Sixty years ago, Franklin Roosevelt renewed that promise with a New Deal that offered opportunity in return for hard work.

Today we need to forge a New Covenant that will repair the damaged bond between the people and their government and restore our basic values -- the notion that our country has a responsibility to help people get ahead, that citizens have not only the right but a responsibility to rise as far and as high as their talents and determination can take them, and that we're all in this together. We must make good on the words of Thomas Jefferson, who said, "A debt of service is due from every man to his country proportional to the bounties which nature and fortune have measured to him."

Make no mistake -- this New Covenant means change -- change in our party, change in our national leadership, and change in our country. Far away from Washington, in your hometowns and mine, people have lost faith in the ability of government to change their lives for the better. Out there, you can hear the quiet, troubled voice of the forgotten middle class, lamenting that government no longer looks out for their interests or honors their values -- like individual responsibility, hard work, family, community. They think their government takes more from them than it gives back, and looks the other way when special interests only take from this country and give nothing back. And they're right.

This New Covenant can't be between the politicians and the established interests. It can't be another backroom deal between the people in power and the people who keep them there. This New Covenant can only be ratified by the people in the 1992 election. And that's why I'm running for President.

That's what our hope is today: A New Covenant to shoulder our common load. When people assume responsibility and shoulder that common load, they acquire a dignity they never knew before. When people go to work, they rediscover a pride that was lost. When fathers pay their child support, they restore a connection they and their children need. When students work harder, they find out they all can learn and do as well as anyone else on Earth. When corporate managers put their workers and their long-term profits ahead of their own paychecks, their companies do well, and so do they. When the privilege of serving is enough of a perk for people in Congress, and the President finally assumes responsibility for America's problems, we'll not only stop doing wrong, we'll begin to do what is right to move America forward.