

GOVERNOR BILL CLINTON

A NEW AMERICAN COVENANT

I am running for president of the United States because I refuse to be part of a generation that celebrates the death of communism abroad by allowing the American Dream to die at home.

I refuse to be part of a generation that fails to compete in the world marketplace, a generation that condemns our hard-working Americans to a life of struggle without reward, a generation that sentences its own children to settle for less.

I am running for president because I refuse to stand by and let our children become the first generation of Americans to do worse than their parents.

After 12 years of Republican leadership, middle class Americans are spending more hours on the job and less time with their children, bringing home a smaller paycheck to pay more for health care and housing and education.

They're are losing hope that they can ever do any better. Our young people are losing hope that they can even do as well.

Our streets are meaner, our families are more troubled and our future is bleaker.

This country is headed in the wrong direction fast. We're slipping behind and losing our way and it's just not right. That's not the America we want for our children. But that's what we've got after 12 years without vision, after 12 years of neglect.

We're going to turn this country around and get it moving in the right direction. We don't need another president who doesn't know what he wants to do for America. I'll tell you in plain language what I want to do as President.

I want a government that will create opportunity for all. That means giving people incentives to make long-term investments in America. It means rewarding people who produce goods and services, not those who speculate with other people's money. It means investing more in new technologies to keep high-paying jobs here at home.

It means pre-school for every child who needs it and an apprenticeship program for kids who want good jobs but don't want to go to college.

Opportunity for all means a domestic GI Bill that gives everyone in America a college education if they're willing to take the responsibility for giving something back to their country in return.

Opportunity for all means a health-care system that holds down costs, improves quality and expands preventive and long-term care, one that gives customers a choice and covers everybody. In the first year of a Clinton administration I will present a plan to provide affordable quality health care for all Americans.

Opportunity for all means safety in our homes, our schools and our streets. All across America, citizens are banding together to take back their neighborhoods from criminals and drug dealers. We'll be on their side with community policing, drug treatment for those who need it and new ways to set young people on the right course, like boot-camps for first-time offenders.

Opportunity for all means protecting our environment, developing an energy policy that relies on conservation, recycling and clean, safe fuels.

Government owes its people opportunity, in return I will insist on citizen responsibility.

If we provide good schools for our young people, they have a responsibility to stay in school and do their best. If they drop out for no good reason, they should lose the privilege of a driver's license.

People who receive welfare checks should get all the help they need to get training and move into a good job. But they have a responsibility to go to work if they can and be productive Americans.

We will try to strengthen families and protect them, but when they fail, we should insist on the toughest possible child support enforcement. Governments don't raise children, parents do.

I want to re-invent government to make it more efficient and more effective. I want to give citizens more choices in the services they get. I want a government that treats citizens like customers and like bosses -- that's what they are.

My administration will defend the American people's interests abroad, put their values into our social policy at home and spend their tax money with discipline.

This country needs a new spirit, a new sense of community, a sense that we are all in this together. Our destiny is bound to the destiny of every other American. We're all in this together and we will rise or fall together.

By making common cause with our children, we can give new life to the American Dream. And it is this generation's responsibility to form a new covenant for more opportunity for all, more responsibility from everyone and a greater sense of common purpose.

Together we can make America great again. I want this to be not just a campaign for the presidency, but a campaign for the future -- a campaign for the forgotten, hard-working middle class, a campaign to keep America strong at home and around the world, a campaign to build a community of hope that will inspire the world and the generations of Americans to come.

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