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Remarks Announcing the Job Training 2000 Initiative in Atlanta

January 17, 1992

Let me say it's been a joy to be back in Atlanta. I was privileged to be over at the Martin Luther King Center, pay fitting and appropriate tribute to that great leader, and now have an opportunity to be here.

I want to single out again, to those who weren't over there, Secretary Sullivan. Dr. Sullivan is the Secretary of HHS, the largest Department in the Federal Government, and doing a superb job. And for you kids, he's from Morehouse Medical right here and went to Morehouse. So, we've got an Atlanta man running this enormous part of the Federal Government and doing a superb job at it.

I was so pleased to have been greeted by the Mayor, who I don't think's here right now, and the Governor, both of whom gave me a warm welcome, one to Georgia and one to Atlanta. I want to salute the Private Industry Council of Atlanta members who have taken the time to be with us. Pleased to be joined by Alvin Darden, members of this effective CATALYST team, now on their coffee break. [Laughter]

I've come here to Morris Brown College in the center, the Atlanta University center, to see this wonderful work in progress and to announce a pioneering new approach to job training, a program that I call Job Training 2000. Programs like the CATALYST project highlight just how critical job training is to the American economy, to American competitiveness, and yes, to the American dream.

As a Nation, America's ability to prosper in the century coming up rests on our collective capacity to learn new skills and test the limits of our potential. On an individual level, what we learn defines who we are. No one, young, old, or in between, can hope to reach their dreams without sharpening their skills and mastering the tools of thought. That's the idea behind our overall national education strategy, America 2000. And it's the impulse behind the initiative that I'm announcing today, Job Training 2000.

Job training must be more than merely make-work. It's got to suit the needs of the workplace and the marketplace. And the private sector will always bear primary responsibility for training the workers it needs to get the job done, the unions here taking a very active and critical role in all of this. But government at all levels can

and must play a role, to use a word that's well-known, as catalysts in this process.

And we are. Right now, the Federal Government's commitment to worker training spans more than 60 programs, 7 Federal Agencies, resources totaling some billion a year. Well, we've got to make certain that these funds are spent to maximum effect, and that's where Job Training 2000 comes in. It's the product of hard work of our Vice President and of Secretary of Labor Lynn Martin, of our Education Secretary, all these working together trying to express a commitment to this country's future.

Job Training 2000 rests on four cornerstones: First, the creation of a 21st-century training system. Job Training 2000 creates a one-stop shopping center for job training, coordinated by private industry councils all across the country. It will move us away from the heavy hand of bureaucratic overkill to a system that allows greater freedom for the private sector and local governments to shape programs that work. I've been asking that question, "Does this work?" And each person I've asked said, "This one works. It's effective."

Second, this program will help ease the transition from welfare to work, from dependence to independence. Under Job Training 2000, we'll dedicate more than million to demonstration projects to place welfare recipients in permanent jobs. And then we'll enlist market forces to break the welfare dependency. A substantial portion of the money government saves as each new worker leaves welfare behind will be shared with the company that helped that person get a job.

And thirdly, this program will ease the transition from school to work. Job Training 2000 will encourage voluntary apprentice programs for high school students, combining quality education, on-the-job training, and mentoring. This approach will help these apprentices keep their options open to pursue their education or, alternatively, to enter the work force as they wish.

Fourth and finally, Job Training 2000 promotes lifelong learning. Job Training 2000 establishes lifetime training and education accounts, enabling the Federal Government to provide the average American tens of thousands of dollars' worth of education and training over the course of his lifetime. Job Training 2000 will create a kind of passport to continuing education, making it easier for people of all ages to receive grants and loans that they need to keep pace with the challenges of the 21st-century workplace. This program is our plan to capture the spirit of programs like the ones that I've been privileged to see today and bring that innovative Atlanta approach, if you will, to every American community.

Let me say to the young men and women that I've met today: Not long from now, these four walls will house the new Project CATALYST Center. But what you're building here is far more than a work of bricks and mortar or plaster or paint. This renovation is a symbol of the larger commitment of this community to generate opportunity for the people who call it home.

So once again, my congratulations on the future that you're building here, on the opportunity you're giving the young people here. And my thanks to the CATALYST team for showing me around this site. And thanks to all of you, whether you're in city government, State government, marketplace, business, labor unions, whatever,

for the fine work you are doing, the example you're setting.

And now, back to work. [Laughter] Hammer time. Thank you all very much. Thank you all very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 11:52 a.m. at the Ventures in Community Improvement classroom on the campus of Morris Brown College. In his remarks, he referred to Alvin Darden, coordinator of Project CATALYST.