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“PROSPERITY WITH A PURPOSE” WILL BE ISSUE IN YEAR 2000, SAYS TEXAS GOV. GEORGE W. BUSH IN C-SPAN INTERVIEW

*Exclusive Interview Aairs Saturday, January 30 at 8 and 11 pm ET;
Re-airs Sunday, January 31 at 12 noon ET*

WASHINGTON, D.C. January 29, 1999 – In an exclusive interview airing this weekend on C-SPAN, Texas Gov. George W. Bush (R) discusses a variety of topics with C-SPAN's Brian Lamb including his political career, the Bush family, Washington politics and the 2000 presidential race.

The one-hour interview will air Saturday, January 30 at 8 and 11 pm ET and will re-air Sunday, January 31 at 12 noon ET. The full transcript can be found on C-SPAN's web site, at <http://www.c-span.org/americanprofiles/jwbush.asp>.

When asked by Mr. Lamb what he thinks the big national issue of the year 2000 will be, Gov. Bush answered “Prosperity with a purpose. One, how to make sure the economy keeps growing. But if it does, how to make sure everybody feels a part of the future.”

Gov. Bush also said it was because of polls released after the 1996 presidential election that he first realized that he was a contender for the presidency in the year 2000. “I can remember sitting in my office and my press secretary Karen Hughes came in and said, ‘You’re not going to believe this. You lead the polls.’ I said ‘You’ve got to be kidding. I don’t even want my name mentioned in the polls.’ She said, ‘No, you’re the leader.’

“It wasn’t that poll. It was every poll since then. I mean, it flabbergasted me.”

In addition, Gov. Bush said he is prepared to face the press scrutiny that faces any potential Presidential candidate. “I’m going to get criticized a lot. And...is your skin thick enough? I think that’s the right question and the answer is, you bet it is. Absolutely. Texas politics is pretty tough. And when you’ve run statewide in this state twice, I think you get a pretty good lesson.”

A full transcript of the interview is attached.



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C-SPAN

**INTERVIEW WITH
GOVERNOR GEORGE W. BUSH OF TEXAS**

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BRIAN LAMB of C-SPAN ON
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 1999
AUSTIN, TEXAS

AIR DATE AND TIMES: SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 8 and 11 pm ET
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INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE W. BUSH 1/25/99

C-SPAN (BRIAN LAMB): You gave an inaugural speech in which you said you were looking for prosperity with a moral and spiritual center.

GOV. GEORGE BUSH: Right.

C-SPAN: Tell us more about that.

GOV. BUSH: Well, in my inaugural speech, I said I was confident if we had low taxes, free trade, free markets, limited government, we'd have prosperity in the state of Texas, that people would be able to make a living and people would be able to realize their entrepreneurial dreams.

But what I'm worried about is that not everybody feels like the future is for them, that the Texas dream is not a part of everybody's view. I'm worried as well that many of the children that we educate are not educated in making right and wrong choices. And so what I meant was that there needs to be prosperity, but prosperity is measured not only in dollars and cents but the values that we share.

I fully recognize government is not the end-all, be-all, nor is economics the end-all, be-all; that to have a prosperous future that means something, that we must rally what I call the armies of compassion all across the state of Texas to interface with our young, to help and to mentor, to let them know that they are a part of the future.

It's all really based around a story, Brian, that was a true story. I went to a juvenile justice facility here in Texas. And after a lot of talk with some of the boys, one young fellow raised his hand and he said, "What do you think of me?" And it was a question that was just so profound and so right. His question meant a lot, and it really to me meant whether—it's the question of the 21st century: "Do I have a piece of the future? Is there a role for me in society?" And that's what I meant.

C-SPAN: What do your 17-year-old twins tell you they think about politics?

GOV. BUSH: They're normal, and so they say, "Don't drag us through the arena, Dad. Let us grow up in normalcy," you know. And Laura and I have done a great job thus far of shielding them from the rigors of politics. If they don't want to go on a stage, they don't have to go on a stage. Right before I went up to get sworn in and put my hand on that historic Bible, I turned to Barbara and Jen and said, "Do you all want to come up?" And they said, "We do." I said, "I'd love for you to." But had they said, "No, we don't want to stand up there with mom when you're sworn in," I would have totally understood. And so there are—so far life has been good here in Austin.

And I presume your question is a thing about the national arena. And I don't know many children that would be saying, "Oh, gosh, Dad, please do something that's going to put the spotlight on me."

C-SPAN: Actually, what I was really thinking was, given the atmosphere in the country right now, what young people are—what your own kids are feeding back to you what they think of all this.

GOV. BUSH: I think they're embarrassed, but I think young people are embarrassed just like old people are embarrassed. They're embarrassed for the country. And I think, at least here in Texas, most of us want to get this business over with; just get it behind us. But, no, these girls are—let me start back with what I said initially. They're normal, and so they're more worried about the next phone call that's coming in or the dance or the social event. I hope they're worried about their homework. But they don't spend a lot of time agonizing over politics.

C-SPAN: Did they campaign with you when you ran for governor?

GOV. BUSH: Not really. I think a little Jenna went out at the very end one day. I couldn't tell whether it was an excuse to skip school or she really wanted to see what it was like to be on the campaign trail. But we really haven't asked them to do that. I just don't like the politics of shoving your kids out there if they don't want to get shoved out there. So Laura and I have done a good job of sheltering. And I must say, the press corps here has done a good job of leaving them alone.

C-SPAN: You mentioned reading in your inaugural speech.

GOV. BUSH: Yes, I did.

C-SPAN: Why?

GOV. BUSH: Because it's the gateway to freedom. And reading is—we lack in reading and comprehension in Texas. Twenty percent of our children can't pass the third grade reading test. Last year over 40,000 students failed the third grade reading test. And of those 40,000, 38,000 were moved on to the fourth grade. That's called social promotion. That says somebody's got low hopes and low expectations.

Now, the sad thing is if you don't teach a child to read in the third grade, there's a very strong correlation with not being able to read in the tenth grade. And if you can't read in the tenth grade, there's no hope. And there needs to be prosperity with values. Well, part of the values is to make sure every child learns to read at the minimum. That's what we're doing in Texas.

I just announced today a bill called Senate Bill 1. It's been designated the number one bill of this session. It says if you can't pass the third grade reading test, you don't go to the fourth grade, but instead you get help. You get to go to an after-school program and you get to take the test again. If you fail, you get to go to summer school and get to take the test again. It is an early child intervention program, and it's going to be one of the best in the nation. And you mark my words what happens. I've seen it with my own eyes, because I've been a governor long enough now to testify to this fact. If you have a governor and a state that sets high standards and high expectations, it's amazing how educators will rise to the standards.

Our state leads the nation in improvement on African-American and Hispanic children's improvements. And that's good news. And we've got a good system here, and I intend to keep it that way.

C-SPAN: How many people live in Texas?

GOV. BUSH: Twenty million. It's the second-largest state in the United States. And in my State of the State, I'm going to say, you know, everybody's looking at us now because of me and because of all the speculation about higher office. And I'm going to remind the legislators, that's good news. We meet 140 days out of every two years --

I want to say to people, the second-largest state in the union has limited government, constitutionally limited government, and yet we do just fine. It causes people to come together for a short period of time to focus on what's best for our state, to put party aside, and to get the state's business done. And then probably the biggest reform of all is send the legislators home to live under the laws they pass. But we're 20 million and we hardly ever meet.

C-SPAN: What's your budget?

GOV. BUSH: Our budget is \$93 billion. That's going to be the budget for the next biennium; not an annual budget but a biennium budget. Half the money comes from the federal government, half from the state.

C-SPAN: What's the federal part of this package?

GOV. BUSH: Mainly welfare; Medicaid. The state puts up a match in Medicaid matches. The highway dollars; we put up a little bit of money in the highway budget. It's mainly federal money. Most of the criminal justice and, of course, most of the education money come from the state. And in education in our case, it's the state and local property taxes.

C-SPAN: Back to reading. Do you read?

GOV. BUSH: Yes, a lot.

C-SPAN: What kind of books?

GOV. BUSH: Well, I read—I'm reading John McDonald (sp) now, who is a mystery writer. I love history. I just finished reading "The Sword of San Jacinto" about Sam Houston. I like occasional social commentary. I say occasional; I occasionally read social commentary. But I love history. I was a history major in college and I spent a lot of time on history. I'm trying to wrack my brain now that you asked me to think of all the great history books. Well, I mean, "The River Also Rises," the book about the Mississippi River that flooded; the '27 flood, I believe it was, of the Mississippi. It's a great book.

C-SPAN: Tom Terry's book?

GOV. BUSH: Tom—no.

C-SPAN: The other one, yeah.

GOV. BUSH: It was a good book.

C-SPAN: Go back to your history, though. What kind of history were you interested in when you were in college?

GOV. BUSH: American history, mainly in American history. I still am. It's amazing to be interested in history and living—making history. It's an interesting coincidence.

C-SPAN: Any part of American history that interests you more than others?

GOV. BUSH: I'd say modern. I mean, I'm interested—I mean, for example, T. Harry Williams's biography on Huey Long, which is a fabulous book. I mean, I loved it. And I'd say more modern; modern being in our case not that long ago, but the '40s and '50s and '60s. Political history interests me. I thought the McCullough book on Truman was an excellent book. I've loved the books on Churchill. Manchester's books on Churchill really convinced me that Churchill was one of the great leaders and heroes of the modern era.

C-SPAN: What did you learn from McCullough's Truman about politics?

GOV. BUSH: About Harry Truman?

C-SPAN: Yeah, or just about what he did that you liked.

GOV. BUSH: Well, he was a straightforward fellow. I'm kind of a straightforward, plain-spoken guy myself. I think—as a matter of fact, I think our state appreciates a straightforward, plain-spoken, say-it-like-you-believe-it kind of guy. And I think at least that's the impression I got of Harry Truman. I wasn't old enough. I was born in '46, so I wasn't old enough to absorb the full Truman impact.

But I thought it was a good book. It was well-written. And I'm trying to remember some of the anecdotes that I thought was most fascinating.

I love to watch the interface between a president and a Congress, and I'm interested in tough decisions. You know, people—in this line of work, one of the best things about being governor is I make decisions all the time, and decision-making interests me a lot. And you can learn about the decision-making process by listening to history.

C-SPAN: How big did you win the first go-around for governor?

GOV. BUSH: I won by 350,000 votes, which was the largest plurality since 1974. It was about 53.7 percent of the vote.

C-SPAN: This time around?

GOV. BUSH: Sixty-eight and a half or something. A lot.

C-SPAN: What did you do between then and now to increase that percentage?

GOV. BUSH: I did in office what I said I would do. And I told people I was going to be the governor of everybody. Even though they may not have voted for me, even though they don't like me, I'm still going to be their governor, whether they like it or not. I also believe we've got a record, a record that speaks to a decent future. For example, our education scores are improving dramatically. We've moved a lot of people off of welfare. Our crime statistics are decent. We've focused on holding people accountable for the decisions they make in life.

I also think Texans appreciate the contrast between the political spats that take place in Washington DC and the willingness of a governor to work with a Democrat lieutenant governor and a Democrat speaker. I came in as the unknown commodity, and there was a tough lieutenant governor named Governor Bullock, Bob Bullock, and a smart and savvy speaker named Pete Laney (sp), both of whom had been around here a long time. And we ended up liking each other and we ended up doing what was right for our state. And I think people liked that. I think people appreciated the spirit of cooperation and advancing the state of Texas and the interests of the state of Texas without playing zero-sum politics.

C-SPAN: Bob Bullock, who is no longer the lieutenant governor, was a Democrat.

GOV. BUSH: Yes.

C-SPAN: He endorsed you.

GOV. BUSH: He did endorse me.

C-SPAN: So go back to the first time you started to get to know him. What did you do personally?

GOV. BUSH: Well, it's interesting. I actually went to see him before the end of the election in 1994. I wasn't sure if I was going to win. I began to smell a little something, though, going on out there. My political antennae were saying, "Well, maybe you've got a shot to win."

C-SPAN: You were running against Ann Richards.

GOV. BUSH: I was going against Governor Richards, who was very popular and a tough opponent. But I began to feel something out there. The crowds were getting bigger and they were getting more enthusiastic. So I sent word, a back-channeled word to Governor Bullock that I'd love to drop by his

house just to introduce myself, just in case I won. And it was a 30-minute—the meeting was scheduled for 30 minutes, and about two and a half hours later I left. And I think—I can't remember all that was said, but I do remember listening a lot. And I'm a pretty good listener. It may be hard to tell on your show here, but I do listen. I like to learn. And I knew he had a lot to offer. I also knew that he was going to be a very important person with whom I'd have to deal.

The same with the speaker. We met once a week for breakfast and never missed during the legislative sessions. The important thing is to spend time and to talk and to talk things out. And sometimes we could reach an agreement. A lot of times we couldn't. But it was all done in the spirit of what was best for Texas. And Bob Bullock was famous for that, and I was most grateful that he was an ally of mine in the end.

C-SPAN: You've got a house and a senate. And what's the breakdown?

GOV. BUSH: Sixteen-fifteen Republican in the Senate, and a 66-seat Democrat margin in the House. But it almost doesn't matter, Brian, in Texas, because we have power-sharing. The lieutenant governor, newly-elected Republican lieutenant governor, just laid out his committee assignments, and I think there's like nine Republican chairs and six Democrat chairs, I think. I'm not sure if those are the exact numbers. But the point is, we share power in our state. We don't divide along party lines. There's not a majority leader and a minority leader.

And the reason why—I think one reason why is we don't have time. When you only meet 140 days out of every two years, you've got to get to the people's business quickly, get your biennium budget done, fund the education programs, reform the parts of education that need to be reformed, and do a few other things and move on. It's a good system. It also is good for the governor not to have the legislature in town full-time.

C-SPAN: Do you have a sales tax in Texas?

GOV. BUSH: Yes, we do; six and a quarter percent, with a local add-on. It's the main source of revenue in our state.

C-SPAN: What about a personal income tax?

GOV. BUSH: No personal income tax.

C-SPAN: So overall, how much does the state take from the individual in this state?

GOV. BUSH: Well, it's a hard number to get, only because a huge component of the funding of our schools is done through local property taxes as well. But we're a low-tax state really on the individual, and I intend to keep it that way.

C-SPAN: Of the 20 million people, what's the racial breakdown?

GOV. BUSH: The Hispanic—you're asking me a lot of interesting factual questions. I hope I'm getting them right. But it is obviously mainly Anglo thus far. But as I said in my inaugural address, reminding people that we're going to be a diverse state. And, by the way, I said in my inaugural we should not fear diversity. Diversity brings new energy, new life and new blood.

And the question really is in a diverse state whether we're going to let race divide us or whether or not we'll be bound by common Texas values. And ours is a state with a huge strong culture of values—values of hard work, family, faith. And I'm convinced that if we do it right and we have the proper leadership, we will be bound by common values and not fractured by race.

But having said that, I said in my inaugural address that shortly in the state of Texas there will be no majority racial group. In other words, the Anglo population will not be over 50 percent of folks. Obviously the fastest-growing component of our population is the Hispanic population. Roughly 55 or 56 percent of the children entering into kindergarten class this year were of Hispanic origin, just to give you a sense for how fast the population is growing. I'd say about 30 percent of the population is Hispanic and 50-plus is Anglo and roughly 12 percent is African-American.

C-SPAN: I noticed you used some Spanish in your inaugural address.

GOV. BUSH: Sí.

C-SPAN: (Laughs.) Bueno.

GOV. BUSH: (Laughs.) Very good.

C-SPAN: How well do you do with Spanish? And do you study it all the time?

GOV. BUSH: No, I don't study it enough. Tengo que practicar. I need to practice. I was raised to speak in Spanish. I took Spanish in school. I've got a decent accent. At least my little brother, the governor of Florida, said I've got a decent—he said, "You've got a good accent. You just need to enhance your vocabulary."

But in this state, interestingly enough, after every press conference, there's likely a hand to go up and say, "En español, por favor." Telemundo or Univision have a big presence in Texas, and so the reporters are constantly asking me to try to translate what I've said in English into Spanish. I'm bold enough to try and confident enough not to let my weakness prevent me from stepping out and trying to speak Spanish. But I need to—I will never hold out that I was totally fluent.

C-SPAN: Have you ever talked to someone who is, you know, bilingual about the idea of whether it's smart to try to speak Spanish when it's not perfect?

GOV. BUSH: Absolutely. First of all, I don't care what they would say. I think the fact that I try, plus it's fun. I mean, I enjoy, you know, talking about ...Es importante que todos puedan leer. It's important that all can read. I think it's important for me to try. But I would think advisers would tell you, "Yes, Governor, it's a good idea to try to speak Spanish, even though you need to practice."

C-SPAN: What's your position on bilingualism in schools and in the body politic?

GOV. BUSH: I'm for them if they work. And in our state, we've got a series of bilingual programs around the state of Texas that should be used as bridges to English, not an end. And in the valley, for example, which is in South Texas, a lot of our kids are transitioning nicely from Spanish to English, I mean, if the bilingual programs are working. But any program that locks a child in a foreign language and prevents them from expeditiously learning to speak English ought to be scrapped.

In our state of Texas, we know because we measure. See, we test in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and tenth grade. We give a test in English. We know whether or not the bilingual programs are working. We know whether children can read and comprehend in English. And if they can, I think it's wise for the state to say thank you for expediting a child's learning of the language that will free them. But if children are locked into failed programs, we blow the whistle on failure. And so my attitude is, let's measure and determine whether the programs work or not.

C-SPAN: When did you first—the very first time you came to this state?

GOV. BUSH: I came to this state in 1948 as a two-year-old baby that had been born on the Yale University campus. I was the ultimate war baby. My dad went to war after high school and fought and then came back, married mother and went to college. And I was born in his sophomore year.

C-SPAN: Where have you lived in this state?

GOV. BUSH: I was raised—first moved to Odessa, Texas. I then lived in Midland, Texas. And then my family moved to Houston, Texas. And then after I got out of college, Air Force graduate school, I moved back to Midland, Texas, married the first lady of Texas, Laura Welch Bush, who was born and raised in Midland. And we started raising our family there in Midland. Then I moved to the metroplex. Right after I met you first, I went up and helped in the '88 campaign, and then we moved back to Dallas, and that's when I got involved with the Texas Rangers baseball team. So I've lived in Midland, Odessa, Dallas-Fort Worth, Dallas and Houston.

C-SPAN: What's this business about a Texas sky you keep talking about? I mean, what's so special about it? And what's the Texas personality?

GOV. BUSH: Well, the Texas sky—I talked about it in my inaugural address, talking about the lone star. The stars shine most brightly. It's an optimistic view of the future. But we love the sky here in our state. First of all, you can see a long way. I'll never forget going from Harvard Business School, which is in Cambridge, Massachusetts, out to Midland, Texas. And I was struck by how far I could see and it gave me this sense of optimism. It's hard to describe, but if you can see a long way, it kind of opens up your mind and it gives you a healthy, strong outlook. I think that's what Texans refer to. At least that's what I refer to when I talk about being with the big sky of Texas.

C-SPAN: How long did you spend in the service?

GOV. BUSH: Six years total. Active duty as a—I flew F-102 fighters out of Ellington Air Force Base. I was in the Texas Air National Guard. The 102 is a Delta wing air-to-air interceptor. And I went to basic flight school at Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta, Georgia, came back, spent another six months or so on active duty learning how to fly the 102, transitioning from what was then—the last plane I flew was the T-38.

C-SPAN: What years?

GOV. BUSH: Nineteen sixty-eight, when I got out of college. I started pilot training in November of '68 and got out in November of '69.

C-SPAN: Why didn't you go on full active duty?

GOV. BUSH: Because I was interested in becoming a pilot, and it became the first slot open and I took it.

C-SPAN: Did you ever become a pilot?

GOV. BUSH: Yeah.

C-SPAN: I mean, a commercial pilot, beyond—

GOV. BUSH: Oh, no, no, no, not at all. Just an old jet jockey.

C-SPAN: What'd you learn about anything from the service?

GOV. BUSH: I learned that there's a way to train a person who knew nothing about flying into being a good pilot. The service did a wonderful job of training. And I'm most impressed about how they drew a rote exercise into one's daily schedule until you got it right. And that's particularly important when you fly.

I'll never forget getting in the airplane and the guy said, "Okay, now do a 30-degree bank and do the turn at 60 degrees." And I did a 28-degree bank and turned 50 degrees, and he bangs his hand on the dashboard there and says, "I said a 30-degree bank at 60 degrees, and that's exactly what we mean." And from that point forward, I got my banks right and the degrees right. And it came in handy in the long run, because there's not much margin for error when you're flying jets.

C-SPAN: Any idea how many military personnel there are based in this state?

GOV. BUSH: No, I don't know, but it's a lot. This is a big military—this is a state that has a huge military presence. It's also a state with a really large veterans' population. What's interesting about the military in Texas is that the Hispanic population has served in our military in disproportionate fashion. There's a large number of Hispanic veterans in the state of Texas, and it makes an interesting mix for politics, as I'm sure you can imagine. This is a proud group of veterans that love their country and love the flag and love their—are proud of their service to the country.

C-SPAN: You know, it's often been stated over the years that the Texas governor doesn't have very much power. Would you deal with that? And if they don't, where are other states where they would have more power than you have?

GOV. BUSH: Okay. Well, the way I like to put it is this. If you're a weak person, you're going to be a weak governor. And if you're a strong person, you've got plenty of power to do your job. I think the powers are derived—here's where the power's from. One, the bully pulpit. You're not interviewing, you know, any of the other elected officials. You're talking to the governor. And that's the way it is with all media. The governor can command a presence.

Secondly, the governor has the right to call special sessions. In a state that meets only 140 days out of every two years, that's a powerful power. I mean, that's good power. It means if we end up, as we're heading down the end of the session, I can say to the lieutenant governor, "We'd better get it right or else we may have to come back in special session." It throws the fear of God in them, because the governor gets to decide the calendar in a special session. I get to decide the call. And whatever the governor decides is what ends up being discussed, and only discussed, during a special session.

And the other thing is, in terms of veto, I can veto bills at the end of the session. And since the legislature is not going to come back, there's no such thing as an override. And so that's a good power as well.

C-SPAN: What are you missing?

GOV. BUSH: I'm missing the capacity to have a cabinet, for example. The state of Illinois, I am told—I talked to my good friend, Jim Edgar, about it, as well as Jim Thompson at one time—I think the governor of Illinois can actually veto a bill and change the wording of a particular bill, which is the ultimate power. I mean, you basically can ignore the whims of the legislature and write the bill the way you see fit. To me, if that's the case, I mean, that's a very strong power.

C-SPAN: How many cabinet officers do you have?

GOV. BUSH: None, although I do name—I mean, we elect—we're a state, the constitution of which was really formed to prevent government from being expansive, and it was a reaction to the Reconstruction era. So, for example, all the officials are elected. The lieutenant governor is elected. The

attorney general is elected. The agriculture commissioner is elected. The comptroller is elected; all officials. We elect the judges as well all across the state of Texas.

In the Constitution, it constitutionally limits the amount of time the legislature can meet to 140 days of every two years, which means over the years, you know, in the name of so-called reform, people have said, "Well, let's meet every year." Well, you can imagine how Texans have reacted over the years to the constitutional amendment saying, "Are you for letting the legislature meet every year?" Of course, Texans have overwhelmingly voted against changing the constitution, voted against annual sessions, which I agree with, by the way. I like limited government.

C-SPAN: Are people pushing?

GOV. BUSH: Not particularly. Over time they have. I mean, over time somebody came and said, "Well, I think it'd be a good idea for us to meet every year. Let's let the people decide." And, of course, it would get voted down overwhelmingly.

C-SPAN: Do you put a budget out every two years?

GOV. BUSH: A biennium budget.

C-SPAN: You yourself, as the governor?

GOV. BUSH: Yes, I do. As a matter of fact, the way it's going to work this year is I'm giving the State of the State two days from this interview. And then the next day I'm going to lay out a budget. And the budget this year is going to be obviously balanced, because it's constitutionally required to be balanced. It's going to contain a \$2.7 billion tax cut. It'll be by far the largest tax cut in our state's history. It's going to be a tax cut that obviously tries to achieve certain objectives besides giving people their money back. One is the property tax cut, to take the pressure off of local property taxpayers when it comes to funding schools.

Keep in mind, we're growing a Houston independent school district every biennium; I mean, 150,000 students added in our education system every two years. I mean, that's significant growth. And we've got to make sure that the state is the primary funder of education and make sure we take pressure off property taxes. I'm also going to eliminate diapers, over-the-counter medicines and Internet tax from the sales tax, and two other reforms; one is a research-and-development tax credit on our corporate income tax—we call it a franchise tax; it's really an income tax—to continue to enhance Texas's standing when it comes to attracting high-tech industry, as well as to change the corporate franchise tax by eliminating 176,000 small businesses from even having to file the form, much less pay the tax. It'll be a bold initiative.

The problem is that the appropriators have got more requests than money available, and all of a sudden you have a governor saying, "Not only should you not spend more money than you take in, but I want you to take a huge portion of the surplus and cash flow and pass it back to the taxpayers." Therein lies the collision. I'm looking forward to the collision.

C-SPAN: How many people then work directly for you if you don't have a cabinet?

GOV. BUSH: One hundred and eighty. But I name—let me make sure you understand it. I name the commissioner of education. I name the commissioner of insurance. I name the health and human services director. So we have a near-operating cabinet. Plus I name boards and commissions that oversee the different agencies. So take, for example, health and human services. There's a board of citizens who I name over a period of time, and they nominate, for example, who the executive director is going to be, and I have veto power.

So I have direct involvement, but it's not like a cabinet form of government as other states know it. But I've named a lot of people to boards and commissions. There's a lot of people who would say, "Well, I owe my job to Governor Bush." And sometimes they listen to that and sometimes they don't remember that. But nevertheless, I feel like I've got quite a bit of power.

C-SPAN: One of the things that you were called in either the '94 election—I can't remember who started it; maybe it was Ann Richards or Molly Ivens—is "shrub."

GOV. BUSH: Yes.

C-SPAN: Is that a derisive term?

GOV. BUSH: I think they meant it to be. It didn't bother me. I mean, any time an opponent starts making fun of you on the campaign trail, it's generally a good sign.

C-SPAN: Did you ever do that to an opponent?

GOV. BUSH: No.

C-SPAN: What's your philosophy of how you treat an opponent?

GOV. BUSH: I ignore my opponents. I try to.

C-SPAN: Totally? You don't mention them by name?

GOV. BUSH: Well, occasionally I point out issue differentials. But I try not to make the campaigns personal. I think Texans and I think Americans are sick of negative campaigning. And so in my race against Governor Richards, I treated her with the utmost of respect. I thought she had made some bad decisions and I reminded people of those bad decisions, but I did so in a way that was not derogatory. It was respectful. And I think Texans appreciated that. And this last campaign was the same way. My opponent and I talked on election night. He said, "Look, I appreciate the way you ran the campaign." I said, "No problem."

C-SPAN: Do you like to speak?

GOV. BUSH: Can't you tell?

C-SPAN: Do you like to make public speeches?

GOV. BUSH: Yeah, I do, particularly if it's a well-written speech. Yes, I like it.

C-SPAN: What's your philosophy of a speech? How long should it be?

GOV. BUSH: I think shorter is better than longer, and I believe in having a well-organized address. I think it is very important to know what you want to say and say it. And I think it has to be a very plain-spoken...I like plain words, to the point. And, so for example, the inaugural address, there were three points I wanted to make. Texas had to be an open, educated and united society if we're going to have a 21st century that is worth anything. And it was well-structured, I thought. And it let me get to the point. Had a few kind of poetic lines. And I got off the mike at the right time, before people went to sleep.

C-SPAN: Do you prefer it being written?

GOV. BUSH: Generally, the way I think any speech maker will tell you that the first time they delivered a speech, there has to be a text. I don't know many speech makers who have taken a brand new

speech, with new lines and new concepts and who could memorize it completely to be able to deliver as if it came off the top of their head. But I think that once you get used to certain lines, speech making can be quite spontaneous. I mean, it is very easy...of course during the course of a campaign, if you've given the same speech a thousand times, of course, all I used to do was to take an envelope and put a few points. Remember to talk about schools, juvenile justice, so and so, such and such. And the words came quite naturally. And it would be amazing how close the words were that I was giving at the end of the campaign to the actual sentences when I kicked off my campaign that I had to stay on script for. That's a long-winded answer to say, initially, I think on a big speech, a new speech, you've got to stay on script.

C-SPAN: Do you use humor?

GOV. BUSH: A lot.

C-SPAN: Does it work?

GOV. BUSH: Well, if it doesn't work, the joke is on me. But...

C-SPAN: Do you tell jokes, or do you just tell stories?

GOV. BUSH: Well, I tell one-liners...I'm pretty good on one-liners. And I love to tell stories. If you've got any good material, I like to use it. But I am...as a matter of fact, we're beginning to prepare the state of the state. And I would like to have a lot of humor in the beginning. There is going to be a lot of tension in the air about the national speculation. And I want to poke fun at myself. I love to tell the story, for example, of...the people love to hear about Mother. And they love to hear about Dad. And they love to hear about animals and pets and family. I love to tell the story about Dad going through an identity crisis and at first came to be when Mother was getting her hair done. And the hairdresser said, "well, gosh, I just cannot believe I am doing the hair of the mother of the Governor of Texas." And mother said "Well, what about the hair of the ex-president?" He said "Oh, yeah, that too." And I think people laugh...they love to hear about Mom. But I think humor is important. I think humor is really important because it indicates that you don't take yourself so seriously. And oftentimes in politics, people take themselves very seriously.

C-SPAN: When do people know you're mad?

GOV. BUSH: When I tell them. I'm kind of like my mother in that aspect...in that regard. I can express myself quite clearly. But also get over it...I don't bear grudges.

C-SPAN: In politics, what have you learned? I'm going to ask you about a bunch of people. Your brother Jeb. From...about politics from your brother?

GOV. BUSH: It's important not to give up. Brother Jeb got whipped in 1994. It must have been a really tough moment for him to come to my inauguration shortly thereafter and see one brother get sworn in, another brother head back into the private life.

C-SPAN: But you got whipped in '77.

GOV. BUSH: I did. But he wasn't old enough to be going to any inaugurations then. But I did. Frankly, it was a blessing. I had just gotten married.

C-SPAN: You ran for Congress?

GOV. BUSH: I ran for Congress. Kent Hands, who is now a Republican, ran a great race. And I came in second in a two-man field. And it was a wonderful experience to be out there in west Texas, which is my home and where I was raised. And it was not such a wonderful experience to lose on election night, but it was a great experience for me and Laura.

C-SPAN: What did you do then that you'll never do again?

GOV. BUSH: In the campaign? Run a race that I can't win.

C-SPAN: And what does that mean?

GOV. BUSH: Well, that meant that this was a district that at the time it was impossible for me to win in. And I was told this by some of the leading authorities. I think if you were to check with Bob Strauss, he would confirm...as a matter of fact, he needled me the other day about reminding me that I had gone to see him, he said it was going to be a tough race for you. Basically, you can't win. Governor Allen Shivers sat me down, said, "I understand you're thinking about running against Hands in the 19th congressional." I said, "yes I am, Governor." He said, "You can't win the race, son." And I didn't listen. I didn't care, I guess. I just went after it. I campaigned as hard as I could, ran a credible race, and lost.

C-SPAN: What have you learned about politics from your mother?

GOV. BUSH: That people are dying for honesty and humor and a straight-shooter.

C-SPAN: Your father?

GOV. BUSH: That you can go into the system with your integrity intact and leave with your integrity intact.

C-SPAN: And from your wife?

GOV. BUSH: Don't try to be such a big shot. Keep your feet on the ground. You know, you're not as cool as you think you are.

C-SPAN: Where did you meet Laura?

GOV. BUSH: I met her in the back yard of Joe and Jan O'Neill in Midland, Texas. Joey was cooking burgers and they said, "We'd like for you to meet a great friend of ours. We grew up with her." And Laura was a public school librarian here in Austin. And when I went over there to visit her mother and dad for the weekend, and she showed up at the backyard and...it was love at first sight. We've been married ever since.

C-SPAN: What...

GOV. BUSH: It has been a good deal for me. I'm not so sure it has been a good deal for her.

C-SPAN: What does she do in the political world that has an impact?

GOV. BUSH: She listens to people. She is not one of these wives, you know, who is kind of charging out ahead of the candidate. She is quiet. She brings a lot of grace to the office. And she has done some really, really effective things. For example, we've had a Texas Book Festival that raises money for rural libraries. And now, for the third year, I want to say third year, anyway second or third year authors from all across Texas have come here to the capitol to be heralded. And there are seminars. And Larry McMerchery (sp) reads. And people from all over the state are beginning to catch on. There's a wonderful place to come and buy books and get them signed for Christmas. But as well to listen to Texas literature. Anyway, Laura has brought a lot of stature to Texas writers, many of whom had been ignored all their life. And as I said, it raises money for rural libraries as well.

C-SPAN: What does she think of the whole business of campaigning?

GOV. BUSH: She loves campaigning in Texas. She is not thrilled with the idea of going national.

C-SPAN: Why?

GOV. BUSH: Would you be? I mean, it is the meat grinder. It is a different life. It is a huge sacrifice. As I say, she's normal too.

C-SPAN: How much does she have to say about that?

GOV. BUSH: Well, every night, she has got a free shot at the old governor. I mean...

C-SPAN: But is it consistent that she says no, no no?

GOV. BUSH: Well, I don't think she says no, no, no. I think she says be careful, be careful, be careful.

C-SPAN: You have a cousin that writes for the...

GOV. BUSH: Yes.

C-SPAN: Christian Science Monitor. Or the Boston Globe.

GOV. BUSH: Ellis. Yes. John Ellis. Good man.

C-SPAN: Are you close to him?

GOV. BUSH: Yes. I like him a lot.

C-SPAN: So when you read him, are you tipping him off?

GOV. BUSH: No, I really don't...he's on his own. I'm not a...I'm not a...I don't spend a lot of time on the phone back-channeling to writers or columnists or political writers.

C-SPAN: How are you related to him?

GOV. BUSH: He's...my dad and his mom are brother and sister.

C-SPAN: The reason I just wanted to ask you about a couple things he said recently in a column. He said, "Washington has become a cesspool."

GOV. BUSH: Yeah.

C-SPAN: Do you agree with that?

GOV. BUSH: I think it's pretty ugly, Brian. I think most people feel that way. I certainly do.

C-SPAN: Why do you think it got there?

GOV. BUSH: No leadership.

C-SPAN: All sides? All politics, all parties?

GOV. BUSH: Well, I just think...I think...that's a nice loaded question. I think that, well, I think that any time you have the President create such an embarrassing situation it lowers the standard. And that's why most Americans, including this Governor, want to get it behind us and get it over with. I think it's hard for legislators to set a national agenda. I mean, the Speaker of the House has got to worry about committee assignments and amendments and, you know, rules and process. The same with the Majority Leader of the Senate. It is impossible to expect members of the Congress to be able to behave like a CEO or the head of the Executive Branch. They just are not in a position to do so. So I don't fault the Congress.

C-SPAN: And here's a much longer thing I want to ask you about, because it goes to not only what's going on in Washington, but also across the country. He wrote this. He said "electronic media have no interest in governments or matters of public policy." Let me just stop there and ask you if you agree with that.

GOV. BUSH: Electronic media....?

C-SPAN: "The electronic media have no...." Let me read the whole thing. I'd probably be fairer. "Electronic media have no interest in governance of matters of public policy. The name of the rating game is scandal and character assassination. This state of affairs will probably get worse before it gets better."

GOV. BUSH: Uh-huh. Well, I think—I wouldn't put your electronic media in our category, because I actually think you do try to objectively have discourse and pass on information so people can make their own judgment. I mean, after all, you took my inauguration address and let people see it for what it was worth. I notice you did put it on quite late at night, which probably was a chance for the insomniacs to sleep for the first time.

I think—I think one of the problems we have in the world of soundbite, coupled with the fact that we have a plethora of stations now that must fill their air time with babble, does create an environment in which the juiciest tidbit is that which tends to kind of emerge out of the gossip. And I think what Johnny's saying is that people—gossip is now the fact in people's minds, and it's a sad state. And I can—I appreciate his blowing the whistle on what is taking place.

C-SPAN: We have the luxury of not having commercials or ratings, so we really don't have to worry about what the size of the audience is. The rest of them do....

GOV. BUSH: Yeah. Well....

C-SPAN: And he says it's going to get worse before it gets better. Do you have that same problem in Texas?

GOV. BUSH: No, we don't. I'm treated with respect. People know and Texas know[s] that when I put my hand on the Bible, I swore to uphold the laws of the state, but I also swore to uphold the dignity of the office. And I have done so. And the reporters here know I've done so.

C-SPAN: But why is it that this kind of a world exists on a national basis, but doesn't on a statewide basis?

GOV. BUSH: I don't know. That's a really good question. I guess because Washington has gotten to the point now where there's no bounds, there's no—there's just too many channels with too many people who've got to express too many opinions, I guess.

C-SPAN: But as you sit down here in Texas and look at Washington, can that be changed up there?

GOV. BUSH: Well, first of all, I sit down here in Texas and I ignore most of it. I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings up in Washington, but I don't channel surf trying to find out who's hollering the loudest. And I really do ignore most of what goes on on the air waves from up there.

C-SPAN: Do you find that others you're around do the same thing?

GOV. BUSH: Absolutely. You bet.

C-SPAN: Is Washington talking to itself?

GOV. BUSH: I don't know about that. But I think a lot of people are sick of it, and they just don't tune in. And as I said, I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings who think people care, but a lot of people don't.

C-SPAN: You said that you appoint the head of your educational departments in the state.

GOV. BUSH: Yes.

C-SPAN: Go back to education, because all through this last year we've heard our audience say we want you to talk about the issues that matter, and they list the same ones every time: education....

GOV. BUSH: You bet.

C-SPAN: ...Social Security, Medicare, and a couple others. But go to education. What role does the federal government play in education?

GOV. BUSH: Well, first of all, people are right about education. I mean, it is the biggest issue. Particularly since we're prosperous. If we weren't prosperous, the biggest issue, of course, would be where am I going to get my next paycheck from? If we were at war, the next issue would be can we win the war or let's don't go to war. In times of peace and prosperity, education is the issue. And so people are right when they say that.

It is somewhat oxymoronic for a Republican and a person who believes strongly in local control of schools to utter, you know—to talk about the role of the federal government in education. Here's the way I like to put it. So long as the Congress wants to spend money, the money ought to be block-granted to states. The money ought not to have strings. The money ought not to be a way for the federal government to govern the way states run their schools because what that ends up doing is it really does end up interrupting the flow of power from the state to the local authorities.

And what's important to have educational excellence is this—in my judgment, of course—is for the state to set clear and understandable goals. A few goals that will change Texas, like excellence in English, math, science and social science. The state's role is to measure, the state's role is put an accountability system in places that says we're going to test you to determine whether or not you're meeting the goals. But it is not the state's role to interrupt authority and responsibility. The state's role is to assign authority and responsibility at the local level. It's to say to people: "You chart the path to excellence." Because what ends up happening is if you interrupt authority that interconnect, people say, "Well, we would have done it differently, Governor, except you made us do this." Or "You demanded this" or "You mandated this program." And so, local control of schools, in my judgment, is the only way to do two things. One is to—the short-term path to excellence in schools, but it's also going to be the way to receive what ultimately is going to happen in education and that's this influx of amazing technologies that's literally going to change the way education is delivered and the way children learn.

C-SPAN: Are you on the Internet?

GOV. BUSH: Absolutely.

C-SPAN: You, personally, use the Internet?

GOV. BUSH: Yes, I do.

C-SPAN: What for?

GOV. BUSH: Well, last night, my daughters were reading an Emily Dickinson poem and they got stuck on a few words in the poem "To Hear the Oriole", I think is the beginning line, and so I got on the Internet trying to find out if there was a chat page or a chat room -- chat room, not a chat page -- a chat room for them to be able to ask some professor to interpret the line for them in the Emily Dickinson poem. There is an idea.

I'm on E-mail a lot. I E-mail back and forth to ex-president Bush. I believe that E-mail is going to be the most efficient way to transfer policy, opinion, press -- to communicate rapidly within a structure, such as a presidential campaign or a governor's office, or a governor's campaign.

C-SPAN: Does he E-mail you back, by the way?

GOV. BUSH: Oh, yeah. He does. He's pretty literate.

C-SPAN: Does your mom?

GOV. BUSH: Mom's on there, as well, yeah. Believe it or not, she's high-tech. She may not look high-tech, but she's high tech.

C-SPAN: How many teachers do you have -- public teachers in the state of Texas?

GOV. BUSH: We have got -- let's see, we've got about 300,000.

C-SPAN: Does the Texas Educational Association support you?

GOV. BUSH: There are four different groups and one of them was very supportive. One of them was neutral. And one of them was -- two of them were not very supportive.

C-SPAN: If you could tell the federal --

GOV. BUSH: That's okay. By the way, a lot of the teachers were for me. Their leaders weren't necessarily for me and incredibly enough, I still -- this may come as a shock to you -- I still try to meet with them to listen to what their concerns are and -- but, yeah, the NEA group was not for me.

C-SPAN: If you were to take the federal government out of any aspect of education here in this state, what would it be?

GOV. BUSH: Well, first of all, we get about six and a half percent of our budget from the federal government, so it's not a huge presence.

C-SPAN: But those have guidelines, though, don't they?

GOV. BUSH: Yeah, they do. There's a lot of guidelines. There's Title 9 and --

C-SPAN: Do you feel they're -- are they intrusive? The federal government?

GOV. BUSH: It's paperwork, it's strings, it's compliance, it's all this stuff that swirls around, that's attendant with receiving one dollar, you know, one tenth of the budget. And so I guess the best thing -- as I say, block grants. Monies that would come down without strings. We -- right early in my administration, the Clinton administration talked to us about receiving "Goals 2000" money. I said, "No, we're not going to take your "Goals 2000" money. There are too many strings. I can't site you the strings. I was just told that there's too many strings. And so I said "no." And they turned around and said, "Okay, fine. Well, since you're a big state, we'll give you what's called "Ed-flex money." We'll send you money down on an annual basis without any strings attached to it. You use it the way you want to. And we said, well, we're going to designate it to reading. And one of the things we designated it for was teacher training. There's a wonderful place in Houston called the Nye House Institute (sp) that was initially set up to train dyslexic children on how to read. Well, they have become a source of teacher training for us in Texas and we gave grants to different local school districts to get their teachers retrained in the science of reading, i.e., phonics, to teach children how to read. And it's been a great program. And interestingly enough, the test scores where the teachers have been retrained in the science of reading, have started to head off the charts.

So there's an example of where block granting can come in handy for states to focus on specific projects that will lead to what I hope everybody wants, which is educational excellence.

C-SPAN: What do you think the big issues will be in the year 2000 on a national basis?

GOV. BUSH: Prosperity with a purpose. One, how to make sure the economy keeps growing. But if it does, how to make sure everybody feels a part of the future.

C-SPAN: Can you remember back in the last year or two when the first time it was mentioned that you were somebody they were looking at?

GOV. BUSH: Yeah, I was shocked. And so were you!

C-SPAN: When did it happen?

GOV. BUSH: I can't remember the exact moment, but I was -- when they first -- I can remember sitting in my office and my press-secretary, Karen Hughes, came in and said, "You're not going to believe this. You lead the polls." I said, "You've got to be kidding. I don't even want my name mentioned in the polls." She said, "No, you're the leader."

C-SPAN: This is the first time you've ever thought about this. I mean, it was --

GOV. BUSH: Yeah, I never really -- I never really ran for -- I mean, Brian, this may come as a shock to you. I didn't wake up saying "I want to do everything I can to be president."

C-SPAN: No, but a poll -- I mean, here's a -- people complain about polls all the time. So the poll did this.

GOV. BUSH: Well, the poll said something that was -- yeah. It wasn't that poll. It was every poll since then. I mean, it flabbergasted me.

C-SPAN: When did it happen? Do you remember?

GOV. BUSH: I think it was right -- now I can't remember exactly when. Probably after the '96 elections, probably a year after the '96 elections. Sometime in '97. Late '97, I suspect. I'd have to go back and look, but it's --

C-SPAN: Are you tired of answering the question?

GOV. BUSH: No. I mean, listen -- because I brought it on myself. There's one way not to answer the question. Say "I'm not running." And so, I understand the reality of the situation. I'm interested. I'm thinking about it. But if I were that sick of it, I'd just -- all I'd have to say is "Brian, I'm not running." And that would end -- and then I'd have to answer the question "why" for about a month, and then they'd leave me alone. They'd be out there chasing after everybody else.

C-SPAN: Well, let me just put this hypothesis -- it couldn't get any better. Sixty-nine percent popular as a governor, you won the election. You're what? Eighty-seven percent approval rating in the state?

GOV. BUSH: Right.

C-SPAN: You're leading the polls on a national basis for the Republican Party, I mean --

GOV. BUSH: Why risk it?

C-SPAN: Yeah! I mean, the only place to go is down. [Laughter]

GOV. BUSH: Well, that's not why you run for political office in the first place. You run for a reason. I ran for a reason in Texas. I want to improve our schools and improve the Welfare system. I want to change the tort laws of Texas. I want an entrepreneurship to flourish in our state. And so, therefore --

C-SPAN: Well, let's back over them quickly --

GOV. BUSH: Okay, go ahead.

C-SPAN: Have you changed the tort laws?

GOV. BUSH: Absolutely. I've signed six pieces of major legislation that changed Texas from plaintiff trial lawyer heaven to a state of reasonable criminal justice.

C-SPAN: How about on the Welfare?

GOV. BUSH: We've reduced the rolls by half. We've substantially changed the welfare rolls in my state. There's going to be some needed additional reforms. I'll tell you an interesting idea. We want to fund group homes for unwed teenage mothers to take mother and child out of the environments in which they live. We're going to call them "Second Chance Homes" to give these young girls a second chance to realize there's a better way than having babies out of wedlock, for example. Help them get educated. But there's more welfare reform to be done. We had a substantial welfare package.

Juvenile justice reform. We completely rewrote the Juvenile Justice Code in 1995. It's as if there was no juvenile justice law. I mean, the laws used to say, "Little fellow, you've committed a crime. It's really not your fault. It's our fault and we're sorry. And we're not going to do anything to help you." And now we've got a near seamless system where we've got facilities and after-school programs and schools within schools and we've made a difference. I made a difference. The legislature's made a difference. The whole system is making a difference in saying: "We're going to hold you accountable for bad behavior."

In the education world -- when I went to schools here in Texas, we went under what was called the "Gilmore-Aiken Bill", written in 1948. I had the pleasure of signing the "Sadler Bill" in Henderson, Texas that will be the paradigm for the next fifty years in public education. And we've got a charter school movement that's flourishing. We've got public school choice. I'm going to ask for vouchers in the next "State of the state" because I think it's going to improve public schools. I got a good record.

C-SPAN: We've only got three minutes left. Let's go back to the national thing just for a moment.

GOV. BUSH: Sure.

C-SPAN: If you jumped in --

GOV. BUSH: Yeah?

C-SPAN: You're up there on top and you go into the -- I mean, we talked about the speaking thing. Are you worried that you find yourself on a stage with 17 candidates --

GOV. BUSH: And you never get a word in edgewise? [Laughs]

C-SPAN: Or, I mean, are you prepared for a long, you know, debate kind of situation where you're having to slug it out and people are -- they're already attacking you.

GOV. BUSH: Well, I saw that. That's fine. I mean, that's -- that's not my style. I campaign talking about what's in my heart and what I believe. And if I choose to run for president, I'll be laying out the reasons why I'm running. And if they -- if people want to talk about me, that's -- that's -- they can do that. I think they do so with a risk because I think Americans are sick and tired of slash-and-burn politics.

C-SPAN: Indianapolis. When you went there to speak, as you know, you got some criticism afterwards. You got a critique of the speech --

GOV. BUSH: I thought it was brilliant!

C-SPAN: But did you learn anything from that?

GOV. BUSH: Don't speak in a hall that's not conducive to being able to connect with an audience. That's --

C-SPAN: How do you do that, though? How do you protect yourself?

GOV. BUSH: Well, we have better advance. It was a hard hall to speak in. But look, I thought it was a fine speech. A lot of people there thought it was a pretty good speech. I got criticized by the national press corps, in my opinion, because I didn't hold a press conference after it was over. But that's okay. Listen, I'm going to get criticized a lot. And I think your question is, do you have -- is your skin thick enough? I think that's the right question and the answer is you bet it is! Absolutely. Texas politics is pretty tough. And when you've run statewide in this state twice, I think you get a pretty good lesson

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