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C-SPAN

-TRANSCRIPT-

**C-SPAN'S IN-DEPTH 30 MINUTE
INTERVIEW WITH
SEN. AL GORE (D-TN)**

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Taped Wednesday, July 22, 1992 in St. Louis, MO
Airing Sunday, July 26, 1992, from 10:00 to 10:30 PM (ET) on
"Round Table with the White House"

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C-SPAN: Senator Al Gore, in your speech, that you gave at the Convention, I jotted down the following sentence --

"Millions of American families have been betrayed by a government out of touch with our values and beholden to the privileged few." Who are the privileged few?

SEN. GORE: Those who have special influence and connections to the Bush-Quayle White House. I think that you can see it, for example, in an issue like family leave. I mean there are lots and lots of examples that I could use, but let's look at that one.

Every industrial country in the world has a policy whereby a family with a child that's injured, or when a child is first born, has the right by law to take a little time off from their job to keep the family together at a time of crisis or at a time when special bonding is required. And even though some employers feel like that costs them money, the -- the -- these other nations believe that in the long run it's in the best interests of the society for the families to -- to be together during those special times. And so they -- they have that right, as a matter of law.

We, as you know, C-SPAN, of course, has spent countless hours at covering the debates on this issue, and the others, but

we debated this -- the House passed it, the Senate passed it -- we came up with a unified version -- overwhelming support -- sent it down to the President. Bush and Quayle vetoed it.

Now -- now why? Number one, because they are out of touch with the basic family values that lead the overwhelming majority of Americans to say, "Yeah -- -- that's a good idea. Because families need that time together at a -- at a moment of crisis."

And, number two, because they were more interested in responding to people of influence who run the -- the factories and who are the ones that don't want to give families time off at -- at those moments. And so they chose that, uh, uh, approach rather than the values that most American families share.

C-SPAN: If you win, on November the third, are you and Governor Clinton going to have to ask the American people to sacrifice in order to get this thing back in order? And if so, does that mean everybody?

SEN. GORE: Yes, it does. And when we have been encountering this tremendous, uh, outpouring of emotion, and hope, and enthusiasm from crowds everywhere we've been -- you know, the last week has been [LAUGHING] incredible -- this bus tour has taken us right into the heartland. And when we say we want to put people first, that's the message people are

responding to.

And when we encounter that outpouring, a lot of times people will say as we're goin' through crowds shakin' hands -- they say, "We know you guys don't have all the answers to all these problems. But we want to put people first. We want a different approach. We want government back on the side of the average working families again."

And they also say, "We know that we're all going to have to be in this together." And Bill Clinton has made a career of taking on powerful interests and saying, "Look, everybody's got to be a part of the solution."

For example, it's a sacrifice for young people who have their college tuition paid to spend two years of their lives in community service in order to pay it back. Now, they can pay it back under the Clinton Gore plan by having part of their wages taken during the first year they are working to pay it back, not like the system now, where the loans are defaulted routinely, and the taxpayers pick up the bill.

But -- but that's an example. If people are going to - - if young people are going to spend two years in community service, that -- that's an example of the kind of approach that requires sacrifice.

C-SPAN: We've watched you on this network from the

House days. As I recall you were the first person to ever sat in front of -- [SIMULTANEOUS REMARKS]

SEN. GORE: I was . . . the first day.

[LAUGHING]

C-SPAN: And then in the Senate, uh, you have been an individual, you've charted your own course. Now, as potential Vice President, have you and Bill Clinton talked about how you are going to continue being an individual?

SEN. GORE: Yeah. We've talked about the basic concept of team work and partnership. And you can't reduce it to a simple mathematical formula. My job during the campaign is to do what I can to help Bill Clinton give this country an opportunity to reach out for change. And if the American people allow us the opportunity to govern this country, my job will be to help Bill Clinton change this country for the better and get our country moving forward in the right direction again; to help Bill put government back on the side of the average working family.

I'm really enthusiastic about that. And, you know, I think, Brian, that one among many reasons why the American people are responding so enthusiastically to what we're saying is that I think they really do sense the kind of team work and partnership that -- that we have. I mean, I think that's only one of a lot of factors. But I do think people sense that. We work together

extremely well because we share the same goals: universal health insurance for the American people; environmental protection; creating millions of new jobs in the process of cleaning up the environment; having the United States lead the environmental revolution; having a fairer tax system, to -- to give a break to middle income families with children for a change, and ask those at the very top of the income ladder to pay their fair share again. Not soakin' them. But havin' them pay their fair share.

These and other goals are ones that -- that -- that we share. And I think people have a good feeling about the way we're able to work together smoothly and I -- I think they like to think that our government could -- could work that way, with partnership and team work with the American people.

C-SPAN: Ross Perot said that his Vice President would have been his chief of staff. In an interview I did yesterday that's going to air during the Republican convention with former President Gerry Ford, he recalled back in 1980 when he was -- they were talkin' about a co-Presidency with Ronald Reagan. And I asked him did he think it was a good idea that the Vice President be the chief of staff, and he said, "Yes." Have you and Governor Clinton talked about that idea?

SEN. GORE: No. Uh-uh. He has asked me to be his point person, to break the logjam on Capitol Hill. He has asked

me to consider taking leadership positions on moving our country out in the field of environmental protection. He has also talked about the high technology issues that represent one of the keys to creating high wage, high skill jobs in -- in the future.

But we're not followin' any set formula. It's just a question of partnership and team work. And however I can best help this country change, by helping Bill Clinton give our people an opportunity to reach out for that change -- that's what I'm going to do.

C-SPAN: You were one of the leaders to get television in the House.

SEN. GORE: Yeah. [LAUGHING]

C-SPAN: And in the Senate.

SEN. GORE: Yeah.

C-SPAN: Any chance that you would lead the way to television in the cabinet meetings?

SEN. GORE: [LAUGHING] Oh. I think those kind of meetings are fundamentally different. And you know the history of television and American government is not one that has featured the Presidency being shy as an institution, [LAUGHING] where television is concerned. You and I have talked about this before. And without -- without borin' the audience [LAUGHING] -- you know that I'd made a study of this when I was a student, and

one of the reasons why I strongly advocated opening up the Congress to television coverage is because there was an imbalance. The Presidency was covered so fully and thoroughly on television. The President went on the TV screen every night, and the -- the legislative branch of government was nowhere to be found.

So when I went to the Congress, I made it one of my issues to open up the House of Representatives to television coverage -- and -- and thank goodness for C-SPAN, because it -- it gave us the opportunity to make that dream a reality. And as you recalled a moment ago, I made the very first speech when the cameras were turned on the Congress and said that the Senate will be next. And when I got to the Senate I made that one of my priorities there, and -- and presided when the -- well, actually, what was it? I forget now.

I wanted to make the first speech when the Senate was--

C-SPAN: I think you had a Minister there from
[SIMULTANEOUS REMARKS] -- that's how you -- uh --

SEN. GORE: That's right. Out of the blue. It wa'n't my doing. Because in the Senate, as you know, it's different from the House. It always opens with the Majority Leader and the Republican Leader.

But just out of the blue the day before the -- the

coverage began the Chaplain of the Senate came up to me and said, "We've got a visiting Chaplain from -- from -- a visiting Minister from Tennessee, would you open tomorrow by introducing him to the Senate?"

I said, "Well, I'll be happy to." [LAUGHING] So I remember we talked about that before.

C-SPAN: Why is -- why would the cabinet meetings be difficult to televise?

SEN. GORE: Well, I think that they certainly could be televised. And I don't want to dismiss the idea. Maybe that can be done. I think that it would change the character of the meetings, simply because -- cabinet meetings ought to be meetings where people really let their hair down and -- and talk candidly about the -- the problems that need to be fixed in the, uh, executive branch agencies. And I would worry that if conversations like that were televised, that some cabinet secretaries would be reluctant to -- to bring out the worst problems right on the -- [LAUGHING] -- the table to say this is terrible, we've got to fix this and -- they might be reluctant to do that until it was fixed.

So you would -- if -- if they were televised you would have a very different kind of -- of meeting. That's not to say it shouldn't be done.

You know, the -- the President of Mexico, um, has every six months a -- a televised meeting to focus on issues relating to children. And he asks all of his cabinet secretaries to come on television and describe what they have done to improve the plight of children in -- in Mexico. Every six months. They get Jim Grant from the U.N. to come down and give a little critique of how they're doing. And then the President himself comes on and -- and -- and says, "Here's where I think we can do better."

I think a format of that kind, related to a specific challenge where each person in the executive branch is reporting on an issue, might be something worth considering. But a routine cabinet meeting where you're trying to fix things that are wrong, I -- I think that would be tough to televise.

C-SPAN: Is the electronic town hall idea dead, now that Ross Perot's out of the game? What did you think of that idea?

SEN. GORE: I liked it. I liked the idea, myself. I liked a -- a good many things that Ross Perot said. And I said that before he got [LAUGHING] -- out of the race -- unlike Bush and Quayle, you know, who criticized him, called him a "temperamental tycoon" and "paranoid" and continued -- continued criticizing him after he got out of the race. That's all they seem to know how to do is just to criticize and point the finger

of blame and make excuses and I really think that's one of the reasons the American people are fed up with politics, and they want to see this whole campaign be about more than politics. And they want to get the country moving again, and get the government back on the side of the average citizens. And I think that an electronic town hall meeting might be one way to do that.

Both Bill and I have been havin' these town hall meetings on television over the last week, and they've been really interesting. People ask really good questions, as you know from the Call-In shows.

C-SPAN: We carried the local one so --

SEN. GORE: Oh, great. Great.

C-SPAN: They can see that. What about the voting aspect of it? He originally started off talking about punching buttons --

SEN. GORE: Yeah -- yeah, I've got -- I've got some reservations about that; because our founders, in designing the Constitution chose representative democracy for two reasons. The first reason was that it was simply impractical for everybody to vote on every question every day -- it couldn't be done. And so people travelled distances to the seat of government and voted in behalf of the areas they -- and the people they represented.

That problem can be surmounted, technically --

theoretically -- with new, modern technology. But we can't lose sight of the fact that there was a second reason why Madison and Jefferson and Hamilton and the others among our founders chose representative democracy. It was not just the practicality of it. It was also the fact that they wanted the people who were making decisions in behalf of the areas they represented to take the time to really study the merits -- pro and con -- of each question that came up; and debate among themselves what the options were, and give a careful, considered judgment to these questions. And -- and not just reflect the passions of the moment by popular referendum on every question every day.

And I think that getting an advisory referendum on certain questions might be a good idea, but using that technique to replace the basic structure put in place in our Constitution -- I think that would be a bad idea, because even though it's theoretically possible, it would undermine this notion of -- of considered, reflective judgment by people who have been empowered by the average citizens in each of the areas from which they come, to study and learn and debate and reflect -- and then decide.

C-SPAN: As you know, every four years when the last couple of weeks come around, everybody starts talkin' about the importance of the debate.

SEN. GORE: Yeah.

C-SPAN: The Presidential Commission on Debates has said three for the Presidential race, one for the vice presidential race. Do you have any intention of asking for more debates with Vice President Quayle, if he is the choice? Or are you just going to go with the one?

SEN. GORE: Haven't really thought about it. Suits me either way. I like debates. But -- suits me either way.

C-SPAN: Would it -- if the President's Commission says there's only going to be one, is there any reason why you would say, "I want more"?

SEN. GORE: I'm not going to make a big deal about it. I like debates. But I'm not going to make a big deal about it.

C-SPAN: Do you generally endorse the Democratic Platform?

SEN. GORE: Yeah.

C-SPAN: I jotted down a bunch of things. I want to read 'em and get your reactions.

SEN. GORE: [LAUGHING] Okay.

C-SPAN: No, this is --these are not trick questions---

SEN. GORE: Okay.

C-SPAN: -- I just wanted to see what -- how far you go with this stuff.

SEN. GORE: Brian, one reason people love C-SPAN is -- it's not based on gimmicks or trick questions, so I know that. Go ahead.

C-SPAN: This statement: "All branches of government must live by the laws the rest of us obey, determine their pay in an open manner that builds public trust and eliminates special privileges."

SEN. GORE: Mmh-hmm.

C-SPAN: That's a theme that runs through the entire Democratic Platform.

SEN. GORE: Mmh-hmm.

C-SPAN: And I -- I just wanted to ask you how you're going to do that. In all branches of government would mean the judiciary branch --

SEN. GORE: Mmh-hmm.

C-SPAN: -- the legislative branch that you're a part of -- and what special privileges is -- are you talkin' about eliminating?

SEN. GORE: Oh, I -- I think that there is a growing sense among the American people that government, especially during the last 12 years -- but they blame both Parties for this -- that government has been isolated from the American people, and that one of the reasons for this isolation has been

the cocoon of -- of privilege that people associate with the way government is -- is run today.

And I -- I think that there is a whole list of them. I personally, and I don't want to make a big issue of this, but I personally have opposed the -- the -- the pay raises that have been -- come sometimes at a time when people have not been able to keep up with in -- inflation, generally speaking. And -- and I think that's part of what the platform is referring to.

I think that the um -- some of the so-called perks that have been in the news are rightly being eliminated. I think, incidentally, that the congressional leadership deserves more credit than they have perhaps gotten for taking the initiative in getting out ahead of that curve and saying yeah, it's past time for us to -- to look at this and review this and -- and I know in the Senate, for example, George Mitchell has been very aggressive in saying we're going to eliminate this, eliminate that. Tom Foley and Dick Gephardt have done the same thing on the House side.

And so I think some of the perception of a year ago may be a little outdated in the sense that Congress seems to me to be awfully sensitized to these things now. And I think the Platform reflects that, partly for that reason.

C-SPAN: The Platform also says, "We call for a

revolution in government to take power away from entrenched bureaucracy --"

SEN. GORE: Mmh-hmm.

C-SPAN: -- "and narrow interests in Washington, and put it back in the hands of ordinary people."

SEN. GORE: Yeah.

C-SPAN: How are you going to do that?

SEN. GORE: There's more to that than meets the eye? Sounds rhetorical. But Bill and I have talked about that a good bit.

You know, in business, we've seen a revolution in management. And you can take that language and apply it to some of the largest corporations in this country, and it would fit; because in fact over the last 15 years what has happened in many of them is that the old, centralized, top-down bureaucratic approach has been replaced by quality control circles; participative management; techniques for asking the men and women on the assembly line to take part in [LAUGHING] redesigning the process, and helping to make decisions on how the overall goals of the corporation can be achieved more efficiently and more effectively. That's true -- that -- that works because it properly values the creativity and the brain power of the human beings who -- [LAUGHING] -- make up any corp -- corporate

organization.

That revolution, in corporate management, now has to be applied to the way we run our government. While there have been some pilot projects, like China Lake in the Navy -- and there are others -- over all the government is still run according to this top down, hierarchical, bureaucratic scheme.

We need to apply the equivalent of quality control circles within government programs. And we need to have regular dialogue between the people who work where the rubber meets the road -- where government meets the public -- where men and women who are delivering services get feedback from the people who after all are in control of the government, the average citizen. We ought to take that -- those interchanges -- and the knowledge and creativity which can come from there -- and feed it into the redesign of these programs, to make 'em more efficient, more responsive to people -- to save money, and to empower the individuals who most know what they're talkin' about, to -- to help fix the problems that we have that lead to so much wasted money.

C-SPAN: Back to the entrenched bureaucracies and their interests. Should people that are in the bureaucracy, and have the narrow interest -- lobbyists in Washington, things like that -- be concerned that if you are elected you are going to go

after this part of the -- the way the whole place runs?

SEN. GORE: -- yeah. They ought to be -- I don't think they're really conc -- I -- I think that sells them short? I think that they're -- that -- that many if not most of them are eager for a better way of doing things. They want to be proud to be a part of what they're doing. And, though a lot of them are, they -- they're disturbed that the, you know, the image that the public has of -- of government -- which in many cases [LAUGHING] -- is all too justified.

And I find that a lot of these people have had good ideas about how to make government operate more efficiently, but have never had the feeling that there was any chance at all that their ideas would be of value in helping to fix it, so they just keep on in the same routine, because they haven't seen any other options.

So -- now, if some of 'em like the way it -- it's going now, in an organization that's not working, yeah -- they ought to be concerned -- because we're going to shake things up.

C-SPAN: One more from the Platform: "We vow to make government more decentralized, more flexible, and more accountable to reform public institutions and to replace public officials who aren't leading, with one who will." What do you have -- 3,000 appointments that you can make? And I assume -- is

that what you're talkin' about? The 3,000 political appointments? Or people that head up different agencies that are bureaucrats?

SEN. GORE: Yeah. Well, of course, on a percentage basis, the number of people who actually turn over when an Administration changes -- and incidentally, I like the assumption upon which these questions -- [LAUGHING] -- are based -- that we are going to win. I think we are going to win. But I don't want anybody to -- to think we're overconfident or taking that for granted 'cause we're not. We're -- we're fighting every single minute of every day for -- for one more supporter to help us change this country.

But -- back to your question -- that's right in line with what I said a minute ago. We want a revolution from within.

Just as Bill Clinton and I have tried to change the Democratic Party to make it more responsive to the vast majority of people who have -- have been makin' up the Democratic Party -- we -- we want to reform and revolutionize the way government operates. And, yes, make it more responsive to the people who are really in charge -- the American people, the average citizens.

And one of the ways to do that is by taking the good ideas that these people who -- who have worked there -- have had,

but have not been able to implement. So even though a small percentage of the managers and officials are actually replaced, I -- I wouldn't underestimate the extent to which a new approach, a new philosophy, of putting people first can completely change the way the government operates.

C-SPAN: As you know, there are lots of independent regulatory agencies in Washington that don't get a lot of publicity.

SEN. GORE: Yeah.

C-SPAN: They don't get a lot of attention. Can you give us your general philosophy of how your Administration, you and Governor Clinton, if you are elected, would use those regulatory agencies? Could we expect larger agencies? Could we expect more regulation? Or more marketplace decisions?

SEN. GORE: Well, uh, Bill Clinton has said on many occasions that he wants, through attrition, to reduce the size of the federal work force -- and that goes across the board -- by 100,000 people. And some of --

C-SPAN: So he wouldn't fire anybody.

SEN. GORE: Well, uh, it's -- it's through attrition. Uh. And -- and I think that can be done. And will be done.

Where regulatory agencies are concerned -- independent regulatory agencies -- of course the -- the law will govern that

relationship. We are a government -- we are a nation of laws and not people. And one of the problems that we have seen in this country with the Bush-Quayle approach is that when the wealthy and powerful have a problem with some decision by a regulatory agency, uh, they're able to come through a kind of a back door in the policy's process and -- and hot wire the regulation.

Vice President Quayle's role in this Administration, with the Competitiveness Council that George Bush ran before he became President, has been to -- to try to hot wire any of these regulations or laws that cause some discomfort to the wealthy and powerful.

We want to have environmental protection that's meaningful. We want to have job safety laws that -- that -- that work and are not undermined. But we also want efficient regulation, without this kind of duplicated effort that causes too much red tape.

C-SPAN: Has airline deregulation worked?

SEN. GORE: Well, it has -- it has worked very well for many communities. For some communities it has not been very beneficial. Overall, the amount of air traffic and service to the public has improved. I think that there are specific cases where the public need for additional service needs to be reexamined, but over all I think it has been a success.

C-SPAN: If it hasn't been a success in cases, should the government go back in and correct it? Or should it let the marketplace decide?

SEN. GORE: In some cases -- I mean, generally speaking, I think the marketplace should decide. But I think there are exceptions to that. I think that where there is a compelling public interest, there may be a case to come back in and say that a particular community that is left out of the national grid needs to -- needs consideration -- there may be some cases like that.

C-SPAN: We're runnin' out of time. We have one last question on -- on safe autos. Just trying to get your position on this stuff and where you think you would head. Take fuel efficiency.

SEN. GORE: Yeah.

C-SPAN: Should the government require the manufacturers to, say, set a 23 miles per gallon? Or should the marketplace decide by setting the gasoline prices on to go higher so that it brings down the use, and then therefore causes the automobile companies to raise the -- I mean, in other words, should the marketplace decide that? Or should the government say, "You're going to have to get to 40 miles per gallon by a certain year"?

SEN. GORE: Well, in every case, ideally, the marketplace should -- should drive the decision. But we have to recognize that in many cases the market sends distorted signals.

For example, the market does not incorporate the National Security cost of relying on a very fragile supply line of oil from one of the most turbulent regions in the world, Iraq and Iran and -- and the Persian Gulf. And the marketplace does not accurately reflect some of the environmental costs of -- of very, very cheap oil and high mileage -- I mean low mileage -- automobiles.

For those and other reasons I believe that while we rely primarily on marketplace signals, that there are cases where the public should, by working through public policy, have requirements to -- to raise efficiency standards. I also think there are economic reasons to do it.

The Germans and the Japanese are now saying openly that the biggest new market in the history of world business is the market for the new generation of highly efficient, environmentally beneficial products and processes that the world is now demanding where automobiles are concerned.

I don't think we're doing ourselves a favor by protecting the old, inefficient polluting ways of the past. Some -- some executives don't want to change, and want to pretend that

so long as they can keep earning the bonuses with the next quarterly report, they don't have to worry about what happens five years from now or ten years from now.

I think therefore that it makes sense economically, environmentally in terms of the public interest generally to -- to have requirements for steadily improving mileage on automobiles. The Japanese and the Germans are already doing that, and they're taking a lot of these markets away from us. So I support higher mileage requirements.

C-SPAN: We are out of time, sir. Thank you.

SEN. GORE: Thank you, Brian. And thank you for the work you do on a regular basis, and all these folks with you at C-SPAN. Seriously.

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C-SPAN: Senator Al Gore, in your speech, that you gave at the Convention, I jotted down the following sentence -- "Millions of American families have been betrayed by a government out of touch with our values and beholden to the privileged few." Who are the privileged few?

SEN. GORE: Those who have special influence and connections to the Bush-Quayle White House. I think that you can see it, for example, in an issue like family leave. I mean there are lots and lots of examples that I could use, but let's look at that one.

Every industrial country in the world has a policy whereby a family with a child that's injured, or when a child is first born, has the right by law to take a little time off from their job to keep the family together at a time of crisis or at a time when special bonding is required. And even though some employers feel like that costs them money, the -- the -- these other nations believe that in the long run it's in the best interests of the society for the families to -- to be together during those special times. And so they -- they have that right, as a matter of law.

We, as you know, C-SPAN, of course, has spent countless hours at covering the debates on this issue, and the others, but

we debated this -- the House passed it, the Senate passed it -- we came up with a unified version -- overwhelming support -- sent it down to the President. Bush and Quayle vetoed it.

Now -- now why? Number one, because they are out of touch with the basic family values that lead the overwhelming majority of Americans to say, "Yeah -- -- that's a good idea. Because families need that time together at a -- at a moment of crisis."

And, number two, because they were more interested in responding to people of influence who run the -- the factories and who are the ones that don't want to give families time off at -- at those moments. And so they chose that, uh, uh, approach rather than the values that most American families share.

C-SPAN: If you win, on November the third, are you and Governor Clinton going to have to ask the American people to sacrifice in order to get this thing back in order? And if so, does that mean everybody?

SEN. GORE: Yes, it does. And when we have been encountering this tremendous, uh, outpouring of emotion, and hope, and enthusiasm from crowds everywhere we've been -- you know, the last week has been [LAUGHING] incredible -- this bus tour has taken us right into the heartland. And when we say we want to put people first, that's the message people are

responding to.

And when we encounter that outpouring, a lot of times people will say as we're goin' through crowds shakin' hands -- they say, "We know you guys don't have all the answers to all these problems. But we want to put people first. We want a different approach. We want government back on the side of the average working families again."

And they also say, "We know that we're all going to have to be in this together." And Bill Clinton has made a career of taking on powerful interests and saying, "Look, everybody's got to be a part of the solution."

For example, it's a sacrifice for young people who have their college tuition paid to spend two years of their lives in community service in order to pay it back. Now, they can pay it back under the Clinton Gore plan by having part of their wages taken during the first year they are working to pay it back, not like the system now, where the loans are defaulted routinely, and the taxpayers pick up the bill.

But -- but that's an example. If people are going to - - if young people are going to spend two years in community service, that -- that's an example of the kind of approach that requires sacrifice.

C-SPAN: We've watched you on this network from the

House days. As I recall you were the first person to ever sat in front of -- [SIMULTANEOUS REMARKS]

SEN. GORE: I was . . . the first day.

[LAUGHING]

C-SPAN: And then in the Senate, uh, you have been an individual, you've charted your own course. Now, as potential Vice President, have you and Bill Clinton talked about how you are going to continue being an individual?

SEN. GORE: Yeah. We've talked about the basic concept of team work and partnership. And you can't reduce it to a simple mathematical formula. My job during the campaign is to do what I can to help Bill Clinton give this country an opportunity to reach out for change. And if the American people allow us the opportunity to govern this country, my job will be to help Bill Clinton change this country for the better and get our country moving forward in the right direction again; to help Bill put government back on the side of the average working family.

I'm really enthusiastic about that. And, you know, I think, Brian, that one among many reasons why the American people are responding so enthusiastically to what we're saying is that I think they really do sense the kind of team work and partnership that -- that we have. I mean, I think that's only one of a lot of factors. But I do think people sense that. We work together

extremely well because we share the same goals: universal health insurance for the American people; environmental protection; creating millions of new jobs in the process of cleaning up the environment; having the United States lead the environmental revolution; having a fairer tax system, to -- to give a break to middle income families with children for a change, and ask those at the very top of the income ladder to pay their fair share again. Not soakin' them. But havin' them pay their fair share.

These and other goals are ones that -- that -- that we share. And I think people have a good feeling about the way we're able to work together smoothly and I -- I think they like to think that our government could -- could work that way, with partnership and team work with the American people.

C-SPAN: Ross Perot said that his Vice President would have been his chief of staff. In an interview I did yesterday that's going to air during the Republican convention with former President Gerry Ford, he recalled back in 1980 when he was -- they were talkin' about a co-Presidency with Ronald Reagan. And I asked him did he think it was a good idea that the Vice President be the chief of staff, and he said, "Yes." Have you and Governor Clinton talked about that idea?

SEN. GORE: No. Uh-uh. He has asked me to be his point person, to break the logjam on Capitol Hill. He has asked

me to consider taking leadership positions on moving our country out in the field of environmental protection. He has also talked about the high technology issues that represent one of the keys to creating high wage, high skill jobs in -- in the future.

But we're not followin' any set formula. It's just a question of partnership and team work. And however I can best help this country change, by helping Bill Clinton give our people an opportunity to reach out for that change -- that's what I'm going to do.

C-SPAN: You were one of the leaders to get television in the House.

SEN. GORE: Yeah. [LAUGHING]

C-SPAN: And in the Senate.

SEN. GORE: Yeah.

C-SPAN: Any chance that you would lead the way to television in the cabinet meetings?

SEN. GORE: [LAUGHING] Oh. I think those kind of meetings are fundamentally different. And you know the history of television and American government is not one that has featured the Presidency being shy as an institution, [LAUGHING] where television is concerned. You and I have talked about this before. And without -- without borin' the audience [LAUGHING] -- you know that I'd made a study of this when I was a student, and

one of the reasons why I strongly advocated opening up the Congress to television coverage is because there was an imbalance. The Presidency was covered so fully and thoroughly on television. The President went on the TV screen every night, and the -- the legislative branch of government was nowhere to be found.

So when I went to the Congress, I made it one of my issues to open up the House of Representatives to television coverage -- and -- and thank goodness for C-SPAN, because it -- it gave us the opportunity to make that dream a reality. And as you recalled a moment ago, I made the very first speech when the cameras were turned on the Congress and said that the Senate will be next. And when I got to the Senate I made that one of my priorities there, and -- and presided when the -- well, actually, what was it? I forget now.

I wanted to make the first speech when the Senate was--

C-SPAN: I think you had a Minister there from

[SIMULTANEOUS REMARKS] -- that's how you -- uh --

SEN. GORE: That's right. Out of the blue. It wa'n't my doing. Because in the Senate, as you know, it's different from the House. It always opens with the Majority Leader and the Republican Leader.

But just out of the blue the day before the -- the

coverage began the Chaplain of the Senate came up to me and said, "We've got a visiting Chaplain from -- from -- a visiting Minister from Tennessee, would you open tomorrow by introducing him to the Senate?"

I said, "Well, I'll be happy to." [LAUGHING] So I remember we talked about that before.

C-SPAN: Why is -- why would the cabinet meetings be difficult to televise?

SEN. GORE: Well, I think that they certainly could be televised. And I don't want to dismiss the idea. Maybe that can be done. I think that it would change the character of the meetings, simply because -- cabinet meetings ought to be meetings where people really let their hair down and -- and talk candidly about the -- the problems that need to be fixed in the, uh, executive branch agencies. And I would worry that if conversations like that were televised, that some cabinet secretaries would be reluctant to -- to bring out the worst problems right on the -- [LAUGHING] -- the table to say this is terrible, we've got to fix this and -- they might be reluctant to do that until it was fixed.

So you would -- if -- if they were televised you would have a very different kind of -- of meeting. That's not to say it shouldn't be done.

You know, the -- the President of Mexico, um, has every six months a -- a televised meeting to focus on issues relating to children. And he asks all of his cabinet secretaries to come on television and describe what they have done to improve the plight of children in -- in Mexico. Every six months. They get Jim Grant from the U.N. to come down and give a little critique of how they're doing. And then the President himself comes on and -- and -- and says, "Here's where I think we can do better."

I think a format of that kind, related to a specific challenge where each person in the executive branch is reporting on an issue, might be something worth considering. But a routine cabinet meeting where you're trying to fix things that are wrong, I -- I think that would be tough to televise.

C-SPAN: Is the electronic town hall idea dead, now that Ross Perot's out of the game? What did you think of that idea?

SEN. GORE: I liked it. I liked the idea, myself. I liked a -- a good many things that Ross Perot said. And I said that before he got [LAUGHING] -- out of the race -- unlike Bush and Quayle, you know, who criticized him, called him a "temperamental tycoon" and "paranoid" and continued -- continued criticizing him after he got out of the race. That's all they seem to know how to do is just to criticize and point the finger

of blame and make excuses and I really think that's one of the reasons the American people are fed up with politics, and they want to see this whole campaign be about more than politics. And they want to get the country moving again, and get the government back on the side of the average citizens. And I think that an electronic town hall meeting might be one way to do that.

Both Bill and I have been havin' these town hall meetings on television over the last week, and they've been really interesting. People ask really good questions, as you know from the Call-In shows.

C-SPAN: We carried the local one so --

SEN. GORE: Oh, great. Great.

C-SPAN: They can see that. What about the voting aspect of it? He originally started off talking about punching buttons --

SEN. GORE: Yeah -- yeah, I've got -- I've got some reservations about that; because our founders, in designing the Constitution chose representative democracy for two reasons. The first reason was that it was simply impractical for everybody to vote on every question every day -- it couldn't be done. And so people travelled distances to the seat of government and voted in behalf of the areas they -- and the people they represented.

That problem can be surmounted, technically --

theoretically -- with new, modern technology. But we can't lose sight of the fact that there was a second reason why Madison and Jefferson and Hamilton and the others among our founders chose representative democracy. It was not just the practicality of it. It was also the fact that they wanted the people who were making decisions in behalf of the areas they represented to take the time to really study the merits -- pro and con -- of each question that came up; and debate among themselves what the options were, and give a careful, considered judgment to these questions. And -- and not just reflect the passions of the moment by popular referendum on every question every day.

And I think that getting an advisory referendum on certain questions might be a good idea, but using that technique to replace the basic structure put in place in our Constitution -- I think that would be a bad idea, because even though it's theoretically possible, it would undermine this notion of -- of considered, reflective judgment by people who have been empowered by the average citizens in each of the areas from which they come, to study and learn and debate and reflect -- and then decide.

C-SPAN: As you know, every four years when the last couple of weeks come around, everybody starts talkin' about the importance of the debate.

SEN. GORE: Yeah.

C-SPAN: The Presidential Commission on Debates has said three for the Presidential race, one for the vice presidential race. Do you have any intention of asking for more debates with Vice President Quayle, if he is the choice? Or are you just going to go with the one?

SEN. GORE: Haven't really thought about it. Suits me either way. I like debates. But -- suits me either way.

C-SPAN: Would it -- if the President's Commission says there's only going to be one, is there any reason why you would say, "I want more"?

SEN. GORE: I'm not going to make a big deal about it. I like debates. But I'm not going to make a big deal about it.

C-SPAN: Do you generally endorse the Democratic Platform?

SEN. GORE: Yeah.

C-SPAN: I jotted down a bunch of things. I want to read 'em and get your reactions.

SEN. GORE: [LAUGHING] Okay.

C-SPAN: No, this is -- these are not trick questions---

SEN. GORE: Okay.

C-SPAN: -- I just wanted to see what -- how far you go with this stuff.

SEN. GORE: Brian, one reason people love C-SPAN is -- it's not based on gimmicks or trick questions, so I know that. Go ahead.

C-SPAN: This statement: "All branches of government must live by the laws the rest of us obey, determine their pay in an open manner that builds public trust and eliminates special privileges."

SEN. GORE: Mmh-hmm.

C-SPAN: That's a theme that runs through the entire Democratic Platform.

SEN. GORE: Mmh-hmm.

C-SPAN: And I -- I just wanted to ask you how you're going to do that. In all branches of government would mean the judiciary branch --

SEN. GORE: Mmh-hmm.

C-SPAN: -- the legislative branch that you're a part of -- and what special privileges is -- are you talkin' about eliminating?

SEN. GORE: Oh, I -- I think that there is a growing sense among the American people that government, especially during the last 12 years -- but they blame both Parties for this -- that government has been isolated from the American people, and that one of the reasons for this isolation has been

the cocoon of -- of privilege that people associate with the way government is -- is run today.

And I -- I think that there is a whole list of them. I personally, and I don't want to make a big issue of this, but I personally have opposed the -- the -- the pay raises that have been -- come sometimes at a time when people have not been able to keep up with in -- inflation, generally speaking. And -- and I think that's part of what the platform is referring to.

I think that the um -- some of the so-called perks that have been in the news are rightly being eliminated. I think, incidentally, that the congressional leadership deserves more credit than they have perhaps gotten for taking the initiative in getting out ahead of that curve and saying yeah, it's past time for us to -- to look at this and review this and -- and I know in the Senate, for example, George Mitchell has been very aggressive in saying we're going to eliminate this, eliminate that. Tom Foley and Dick Gephardt have done the same thing on the House side.

And so I think some of the perception of a year ago may be a little outdated in the sense that Congress seems to me to be awfully sensitized to these things now. And I think the Platform reflects that, partly for that reason.

C-SPAN: The Platform also says, "We call for a

revolution in government to take power away from entrenched bureaucracy --"

SEN. GORE: Mmh-hmm.

C-SPAN: -- "and narrow interests in Washington, and put it back in the hands of ordinary people."

SEN. GORE: Yeah.

C-SPAN: How are you going to do that?

SEN. GORE: There's more to that than meets the eye? Sounds rhetorical. But Bill and I have talked about that a good bit.

You know, in business, we've seen a revolution in management. And you can take that language and apply it to some of the largest corporations in this country, and it would fit; because in fact over the last 15 years what has happened in many of them is that the old, centralized, top-down bureaucratic approach has been replaced by quality control circles; participative management; techniques for asking the men and women on the assembly line to take part in [LAUGHING] redesigning the process, and helping to make decisions on how the overall goals of the corporation can be achieved more efficiently and more effectively. That's true -- that -- that works because it properly values the creativity and the brain power of the human beings who -- [LAUGHING] -- make up any corp -- corporate

organization.

That revolution, in corporate management, now has to be applied to the way we run our government. While there have been some pilot projects, like China Lake in the Navy -- and there are others -- over all the government is still run according to this top down, hierarchical, bureaucratic scheme.

We need to apply the equivalent of quality control circles within government programs. And we need to have regular dialogue between the people who work where the rubber meets the road -- where government meets the public -- where men and women who are delivering services get feedback from the people who after all are in control of the government, the average citizen. We ought to take that -- those interchanges -- and the knowledge and creativity which can come from there -- and feed it into the redesign of these programs, to make 'em more efficient, more responsive to people -- to save money, and to empower the individuals who most know what they're talkin' about, to -- to help fix the problems that we have that lead to so much wasted money.

C-SPAN: Back to the entrenched bureaucracies and their interests. Should people that are in the bureaucracy, and have the narrow interest -- lobbyists in Washington, things like that -- be concerned that if you are elected you are going to go

after this part of the -- the way the whole place runs?

SEN. GORE: -- yeah. They ought to be -- I don't think they're really conc -- I -- I think that sells them short? I think that they're -- that -- that many if not most of them are eager for a better way of doing things. They want to be proud to be a part of what they're doing. And, though a lot of them are, they -- they're disturbed that the, you know, the image that the public has of -- of government -- which in many cases [LAUGHING] -- is all too justified.

And I find that a lot of these people have had good ideas about how to make government operate more efficiently, but have never had the feeling that there was any chance at all that their ideas would be of value in helping to fix it, so they just keep on in the same routine, because they haven't seen any other options.

So -- now, if some of 'em like the way it -- it's going now, in an organization that's not working, yeah -- they ought to be concerned -- because we're going to shake things up.

C-SPAN: One more from the Platform: "We vow to make government more decentralized, more flexible, and more accountable to reform public institutions and to replace public officials who aren't leading, with one who will." What do you have -- 3,000 appointments that you can make? And I assume -- is

that what you're talkin' about? The 3,000 political appointments? Or people that head up different agencies that are bureaucrats?

SEN. GORE: Yeah. Well, of course, on a percentage basis, the number of people who actually turn over when an Administration changes -- and incidentally, I like the assumption upon which these questions -- [LAUGHING] -- are based -- that we are going to win. I think we are going to win. But I don't want anybody to -- to think we're overconfident or taking that for granted 'cause we're not. We're -- we're fighting every single minute of every day for -- for one more supporter to help us change this country.

But -- back to your question -- that's right in line with what I said a minute ago. We want a revolution from within.

Just as Bill Clinton and I have tried to change the Democratic Party to make it more responsive to the vast majority of people who have -- have been makin' up the Democratic Party -- we -- we want to reform and revolutionize the way government operates. And, yes, make it more responsive to the people who are really in charge -- the American people, the average citizens.

And one of the ways to do that is by taking the good ideas that these people who -- who have worked there -- have had,

but have not been able to implement. So even though a small percentage of the managers and officials are actually replaced, I -- I wouldn't underestimate the extent to which a new approach, a new philosophy, of putting people first can completely change the way the government operates.

C-SPAN: As you know, there are lots of independent regulatory agencies in Washington that don't get a lot of publicity.

SEN. GORE: Yeah.

C-SPAN: They don't get a lot of attention. Can you give us your general philosophy of how your Administration, you and Governor Clinton, if you are elected, would use those regulatory agencies? Could we expect larger agencies? Could we expect more regulation? Or more marketplace decisions?

SEN. GORE: Well, uh, Bill Clinton has said on many occasions that he wants, through attrition, to reduce the size of the federal work force -- and that goes across the board -- by 100,000 people. And some of --

C-SPAN: So he wouldn't fire anybody.

SEN. GORE: Well, uh, it's -- it's through attrition. Uh. And -- and I think that can be done. And will be done.

Where regulatory agencies are concerned -- independent regulatory agencies -- of course the -- the law will govern that

relationship. We are a government -- we are a nation of laws and not people. And one of the problems that we have seen in this country with the Bush-Quayle approach is that when the wealthy and powerful have a problem with some decision by a regulatory agency, uh, they're able to come through a kind of a back door in the policy's process and -- and hot wire the regulation.

Vice President Quayle's role in this Administration, with the Competitiveness Council that George Bush ran before he became President, has been to -- to try to hot wire any of these regulations or laws that cause some discomfort to the wealthy and powerful.

We want to have environmental protection that's meaningful. We want to have job safety laws that -- that -- that work and are not undermined. But we also want efficient regulation, without this kind of duplicated effort that causes too much red tape.

C-SPAN: Has airline deregulation worked?

SEN. GORE: Well, it has -- it has worked very well for many communities. For some communities it has not been very beneficial. Overall, the amount of air traffic and service to the public has improved. I think that there are specific cases where the public need for additional service needs to be reexamined, but over all I think it has been a success.

C-SPAN: If it hasn't been a success in cases, should the government go back in and correct it? Or should it let the marketplace decide?

SEN. GORE: In some cases -- I mean, generally speaking, I think the marketplace should decide. But I think there are exceptions to that. I think that where there is a compelling public interest, there may be a case to come back in and say that a particular community that is left out of the national grid needs to -- needs consideration -- there may be some cases like that.

C-SPAN: We're runnin' out of time. We have one last question on -- on safe autos. Just trying to get your position on this stuff and where you think you would head. Take fuel efficiency.

SEN. GORE: Yeah.

C-SPAN: Should the government require the manufacturers to, say, set a 23 miles per gallon? Or should the marketplace decide by setting the gasoline prices on to go higher so that it brings down the use, and then therefore causes the automobile companies to raise the -- I mean, in other words, should the marketplace decide that? Or should the government say, "You're going to have to get to 40 miles per gallon by a certain year"?

SEN. GORE: Well, in every case, ideally, the marketplace should -- should drive the decision. But we have to recognize that in many cases the market sends distorted signals.

For example, the market does not incorporate the National Security cost of relying on a very fragile supply line of oil from one of the most turbulent regions in the world, Iraq and Iran and -- and the Persian Gulf. And the marketplace does not accurately reflect some of the environmental costs of -- of very, very cheap oil and high mileage -- I mean low mileage -- automobiles.

For those and other reasons I believe that while we rely primarily on marketplace signals, that there are cases where the public should, by working through public policy, have requirements to -- to raise efficiency standards. I also think there are economic reasons to do it.

The Germans and the Japanese are now saying openly that the biggest new market in the history of world business is the market for the new generation of highly efficient, environmentally beneficial products and processes that the world is now demanding where automobiles are concerned.

I don't think we're doing ourselves a favor by protecting the old, inefficient polluting ways of the past. Some -- some executives don't want to change, and want to pretend that

so long as they can keep earning the bonuses with the next quarterly report, they don't have to worry about what happens five years from now or ten years from now.

I think therefore that it makes sense economically, environmentally in terms of the public interest generally to -- to have requirements for steadily improving mileage on automobiles. The Japanese and the Germans are already doing that, and they're taking a lot of these markets away from us. So I support higher mileage requirements.

C-SPAN: We are out of time, sir. Thank you.

SEN. GORE: Thank you, Brian. And thank you for the work you do on a regular basis, and all these folks with you at C-SPAN. Seriously.

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**C-SPAN'S IN-DEPTH 30 MINUTE
INTERVIEW WITH
SEN. AL GORE (D-TN)**

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**Taped Wednesday, July 22, 1992 in St.Louis, MO
Airing Sunday, July 26, 1992, from 10-10:30 PM (ET) on
*"Road To The White House"***

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