

January 11, 1996

realized that our nation is in many ways facing the same kinds of challenges it was in 1991. In my first State of the State, we sent our prayers to those serving in the Persian Gulf. Today, our prayers are with those trying to keep peace in war-torn Bosnia. Back then, I warned that the federal government had to face up to its financial responsibilities. While Nebraska has learned to live within its means, the same cannot be said for our federal government in Washington and, as a result, all of us are suffering from the consequences. As I faced my first legislative session, I asked for the help of every Nebraskan to meet our challenges. I told you then that, "We can do what must be done." Working together, we've answered that call. We've seen fundamental change and a great deal of progress in Nebraska and we've set an example those in our nation's capital would be wise to follow. We've worked hard to make sure our education system is the best it can be. We recognize that money alone will not solve the problems in our schools. That's why we've used our resources wisely and targeted our funding to give students the tools they need to succeed. We've boosted state aid to education by more than \$79 million during my administration. That's an increase of more than 22 percent. Since 1993, nearly \$20 million in state lottery funds have gone into a fund for innovative education projects, many of those involving computer technology. We've given students the knowledge they need to keep drugs and gang activity out of their lives. Our students and teachers have responded. Our performance on national tests continues to place Nebraska among the highest scoring states in the country. But in this competitive environment, good isn't good enough. Establishing measurable standards will help us bring out the best in every student. Nebraska's six ethanol plants now produce 275 million gallons every year. The ethanol industry has increased corn prices and jobs. More than 4,000 Nebraska jobs are tied to ethanol production. Our "Employment First" welfare...our "Employment First" welfare reform program will help welfare recipients get back to work. We're returning our welfare system to the temporary safety net that it was meant to be. We've passed a juvenile crime bill and armed our carrier enforcement officers. The "Safe Streets Act of '95" is putting and keeping more dangerous offenders behind bars. We've given our law enforcement officers more tools in their battle--improved DNA testing and a new high-tech fingerprint identification system. Now we can build on our achievements. The new challenges we face present even more opportunities for