

DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

Gov. Romer calls education 'greatest gift' to children

By Fred Brown

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CHICAGO — Colorado Gov. Roy Romer last night reminded Democrats at their national convention of the critical importance of education to the nation's future.

"Look deeply in the eyes of a child," Romer urged in a brief peech from the dais.

"To know what to value, to know what beauty is, to know how to sort out what's true and what's false. This is the greatest gift we can give to all of our children."

He praised the Clinton administration's record on education and urged the president's re-election. "The commitment of Bill Clinton and Al Gore is clear and unwavering," Romer said.

He talked about visiting a third-grade class in Aurora, where a lit-

tle girl told him her favorite subject is reading.

Why is it so important, Romer asked her. "She calmly replied, 'I can't be governor if I can't read,'" Romer said.

"How can we become all that we were born to be unless we can read, unless we have the tools that education gives us?" Romer said.

"Education can lift us up, it can raise our sights, it can make us reach for the best that's within us, as a people, as a community, as a nation whose greatness is yet to come."

Romer was one of a dozen presenters on topics in the Democratic Party platform. He said the White House asked him to speak about education.

"When I went up to the podium I couldn't find a place for my

sticks," he told reporters as he left the stage, referring to the crutches he's using to navigate on a broken right leg.

"I leaned them against the podium, but I had to be sure I could get to them again. Because if they fall down, that's an exercise."

Earlier in the day, Romer spoke at a workshop sponsored by the centrist Democratic Leadership Council, where he fielded several questions about the state's educational programs.

Romer described at length the effort by Western governors to create a computer-accessible "virtual university," where students are given the most efficient course schedule to reach their goals.

He also urged adoption of a national education policy.