

Adoption ~~4~~
Foster Care

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 19, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AND FIRST LADY
AT ADOPTION BILL SIGNING

The East Room

1:53 P.M. EST

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you and welcome to the East Room. Please be seated. We are delighted to have all of you join us today for this very important event and one that many of you in this room have worked for and looked for for many years.

There are some people that I would like to acknowledge and introduce before we get started. You will hear from the four members of Congress who are here on the stage, Representative Kennelly, Representative Camp, Senator Chafee and Senator Rockefeller. Also attending are Senator Craig, Senator DeWine, Senator Landrieu, Representative Levin, Representative Oberstar, Representative Maloney, and Representative Morella. And I'd like to ask all the members of Congress to please stand. (Applause.)

This was truly a bipartisan piece of legislation. It could not have been passed without the strong support of the members whom you see, including the sponsors who are here on the stage. It was also a work that was very much in the heart of Secretary Donna Shalala and her team from HHS -- Richard Tarplin, Mary Bourdette, and Carol Williams. And I'd like to ask the Secretary and her team to stand please. (Applause.)

There were also a number of members of the White House staff who worked very hard with members of Congress and with members of the HHS contingent, and I'd like to acknowledge just a few of them -- John Hilley, Bruce Reed, Elena Kagan, and in particular Jen Klein and Nicole Rabner. I want to thank all of them. (Applause.)

I'm also pleased that we have Governor Romer of Colorado. We have children, families, advocates, and leaders of the child welfare constituency here in our audience.

Nearly a year ago, the President and I met with children waiting in the foster care system for caring families to call their own. There the President pledged to reform the child welfare system to work better for the children it serves, to put their health and safety first, and to move children more quickly into safe and permanent homes. Today we as a nation make good on that pledge.

And for the thousands of American children who wait for a stable, loving home that will always be there, it is not a moment too soon. Right now there are nearly half a million children in foster care. For most, foster care is a safe haven on the road to a permanent home or back home. Too many, however, make countless detours along the way, shuffling from family to family without much hope that they will ever find permanent parents to love and take care of them. These children who will enter this holiday season unsure about whether the family they celebrate this year will be there with them next year deserve better.

We know it makes a difference for children to have permanent loving homes. It's not only research that tells us this; we know it by our intuition, by our own experience and we have all seen it firsthand. It was here in this room two years ago that a young woman named Deanna -- a child waiting to be adopted in foster care stood up and read a poem about what she wanted in life, and it wasn't real complicated. It is what all of us want. I'm happy that because of that event here in the East Room, she was able to meet a family who did adopt her. And I saw her last year at an event in Kansas City and almost didn't recognize her -- from a shy, withdrawn 13-year-old, she had blossomed into a cheerful, outgoing, confident teenager with a brilliant smile.

This landmark legislation that the President is about to sign will see to it there are more stories like Deanna's. This legislation stands as proof of what we can accomplish when we come together. As we see today, the national government does have an important role to play in reforming our foster care system, and giving guidance to courts and states in offering incentives to speed up and increase the numbers of adoptions, and in making sure that the health and safety of our children is always the first priority.

But we know even more, all Americans have a role and a responsibility. Businesses can make it easier for their employees to adopt a child. And I want to single out Dave Thomas of Wendy's, who has led the way in showing all of us how that can be done. (Applause.)

Religious leaders can help spread the word about the joys of adoptions. Parents thinking about adoption can expand their search to reach out to kids in foster care. And if we reform the system so that it works the way that it should, more Americans will look to American children to adopt and not feel compelled to go overseas to adopt children. (Applause.)

With us today are some extraordinary Americans who have answered this call. This morning, the Department of Health and Human Services observed National Adoption Month by honoring outstanding achievements with the 1997 Adoption 2002 Excellence Awards. Secretary Shalala developed these awards at the request of the President. The winners are dedicated individuals and organizations, both large and small, who have worked to move children out of the foster care system and into permanent, loving homes. Some of them have been at the forefront of this issue for years; some have promoted and supported adoption in their communities; and some are parents who have opened their homes and hearts to our nation's most vulnerable children.

I'd like to ask all the honorees who were honored this morning to please stand. (Applause.) We want to thank you for the work you have done, for the example you have set. And we hope that through these awards, in conjunction with this legislation, there will be many, many more in your ranks in the years to come.

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THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sue Ann. Thank you, Aaron (phonetic). And I want to thank the Badeau family for showing up. I think it's fair to say it was a greater effort for them than for anyone else here. (Laughter.) I appreciate the rest of your presence. It was easier for me than anybody; I just had to come downstairs. (Laughter.) But I'm grateful that they're here.

Secretary Shalala, I thank you and your staff for your remarkable work on this. And I thank the members of the White House staff, all the

members of Congress who are present here. And especially I thank Senators Rockefeller and Chafee and Congressmen Camp and Kennelly for their work and for what they said here.

Congratulations to the Adoption 2002 Excellence Award winners. I thank all the advocates who are here. And I say a special word of thanks, along with all the others who have said it, to the First Lady, who has been passionately committed to this issue for at least 25 years now that I know. Thank you, Governor Romer, for coming. And thank you, Dave Thomas, for what you've done.

Again let me say to all the members of Congress who are here, Republicans and Democrats alike, I am very grateful for what you've done. This, after all, is what we got in public life for, isn't it?

Before I make my brief remarks, if you'll forgive me and understand, I have to make one public statement today about the situation in Iraq.

As I have said before, I prefer to resolve this situation peacefully, with our friends and allies, and I am working hard to do just that. But I want to be clear again about the necessary objective of any diplomacy now underway. Iraq must comply with the unanimous will of the international community and let the weapons inspectors resume their work to prevent Iraq from developing an arsenal of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. The inspectors must be able to do so without interference. That's our top line; that's our bottom line. I want to achieve it diplomatically. But we're taking every step to make sure we are prepared to pursue whatever options are necessary.

I do not want these children we are trying to put in stable homes to grow up into a world where they are threatened by terrorists with biological and chemical weapons. It is not right. (Applause.)

It's hard to believe now, but it was just a little less than a year ago when I directed our administration to develop a plan to double the number of children we move from foster care to adoptive homes by the year 2002. We know that foster parents provide safe and caring families for children. But the children should not be trapped in them forever, especially when there are open arms waiting to welcome them into permanent homes.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act, which I am about to sign, is consistent with the work of the 2002 report and our goals. It fundamentally alters our nation's approach to foster care and adoption. And fundamentally, it will improve the well-being of hundreds of thousands of our most vulnerable children. The new legislation makes it clear that children's health and safety are the paramount concerns of our public child welfare system. It makes it clear that good foster care provides important safe havens for our children, but it is by definition a temporary, not a permanent, setting.

The new law will help us to speed children out of foster care into permanent families by setting meaningful time limits for child welfare decisions, by clarifying which family situations call for reasonable reunification efforts and which simply do not. It will provide states with financial incentives to increase the number of children adopted each year. It will ensure that adopted children with special needs never lose their health coverage -- a big issue. Thank you, Congress, for doing that. It will reauthorize federal funding for timely services to alleviate crisis before they become serious, that aid the reunification of families that help to meet post-adoption needs.

With these measures we help families stay together where reunification is possible and help find safe homes for children much

more quickly when it is not. We've come together in an extraordinary example of bipartisan cooperation to meet the urgent needs of children at risk. We put our differences aside, and put our children first.

This landmark legislation builds on other action taken in the last few years by Congress: the Adoption Tax Credit I signed into law August to make adopting children more affordable for families, especially those who adopt children with special needs; the Multiethnic Placement Act, enacted two years ago, ensuring that adoption is free from discrimination and delay, based on race, culture, or ethnicity; and the very first law I signed as President, the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, which enables parents to take time off to adopt a child without losing their jobs or their health insurance.

We have put in place here the building blocks of giving all of our children what should be their fundamental right -- a chance at a decent, safe home; an honorable, orderly, positive upbringing; a chance to live out their dreams and fulfill their God-given capacities.

Now, as we approach Thanksgiving, when families all across our country come together to give thanks for their blessings, I would like to encourage more families to consider opening their homes and their hearts to children who need loving homes. You may not want to go as far as the Badeaus have -- (laughter) -- but they are a shining example of how we grow -- (applause) -- they are a shining example of how we grow when we give, how we can be blessed in return many times over. We thank them and all -- all of the adoptive parents in the country.

For those who are now or have been foster or adoptive parents, I'd like to say thank you on behalf of a grateful nation, and again say at Thanksgiving, let us thank God for our blessings and resolve to give more of our children the blessings they deserve.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END

2:19 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 19, 1997

PRESIDENT CLINTON SIGNS
THE ADOPTION AND SAFE FAMILIES ACT OF 1997

November 19, 1997

Today, President Clinton signs into law the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, to help thousands of children waiting in foster care move more quickly into safe and permanent homes. This overwhelmingly bipartisan legislation was based in large part on the recommendations of the Administration's Adoption 2002 report. The report takes its name from one of the President's central goals which is, at a minimum, to double the number of adoptions to 54,000 by the year 2002.

The Act makes sweeping changes in federal law on adoption and foster care enacted in 1980. The new law makes clear that the health and safety of children must be the paramount concerns of state child welfare services. It sets swifter time frames for making permanent placement decisions and terminating parental rights for children. For the first time, states will have financial incentives to increase adoptions. Children with special needs and ongoing medical needs are ensured health care coverage. Federal funds will continue for programs that work to keep families together when it is appropriate and safe to do so.

Ensuring that Children are Safe

Clarifies Reasonable Efforts: As the President proposed, the new law ensures that children's health and safety are the primary concerns of the public child welfare system. It clarifies that there are instances when states are not required to make reasonable efforts to keep children with their parents, such as when a parent has been convicted of murdering another child or a child has been abandoned, tortured, or chronically abused.

Doubling the Number of Children
Adopted or Permanently Placed by 2002

Creates Financial Incentives: The new law contains the President's plan to offer a financial bonus to states that increase the number of children who are adopted from the public foster care system. These incentives will help to double the number of children adopted. For every additional child adopted, a state will receive \$4,000, with an additional \$2,000 paid for each child with special needs. The Act authorizes \$20 million for each of 5 years (FY 1999 to FY 2003) for the bonuses, though eventually the bonuses will be offset by savings in foster care expenses.

Establishes Tighter Time Limits: Children who cannot safely return to their own families often wait far too long in foster care -- typically over 3 years, and many times even longer. Under the new law, permanency hearings will now be held no later than 12 months after a child enters foster care, 6 months earlier than under previous law, and states must initiate termination of parental rights proceedings, except in specified circumstances, for any child who has been in foster care

for 15 of the previous 22 months.

Breaking Down Barriers, Promoting Safe and Stable Families, and Achieving Accountability

Eliminating Obstacles: The new law prohibits delaying or denying adoptions across state or county lines, thereby breaking geographic barriers to adoption.

Providing Supportive Services: The new law ensures that children with special needs keep health insurance coverage when they are adopted, either through Medicaid or through the new children's health program. In addition, the new law reauthorizes the Family Preservation and Family Support Services Program, renamed Promoting Safe and Stable Families, which provides services to strengthen families before crises occur and to ensure safe, stable homes for children who return to their families.

Emphasizing Results for Children: The new law authorizes HHS, in consultation with states, to develop new measures to track and rate state performance efforts in providing child welfare services to ensure successful results for children.

Recognizing Success: Prior to the bill signing today, HHS recognized 13 awardees for significant achievement in helping both adopted children and those waiting for adoption. Among the awardees are families, foundations, members of the media, and states that have improved the management of child welfare programs.

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION RECORD ON ADOPTION

November 19, 1997

"I am pleased that the Senate and the House of Representatives have passed historic, bipartisan legislation to promote adoption and improve our nation's child welfare system, giving our nation's most vulnerable children what every child deserves -- a safe and permanent home."
-- Statement by President Clinton, November 13, 1997

The Clinton Administration has previously taken several important steps to encourage and increase adoptions and to support the families who choose to open their hearts and their homes to these children. Since taking office in 1993, the President has championed programs that find and assist adoptive families, and has committed his Administration to breaking down barriers, including high adoption costs and complex regulations. These steps include:

MAKING ADOPTION AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES. Last year, President Clinton signed into law the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, which provides a \$5,000 tax credit to families adopting children, and a \$6,000 tax credit for families adopting children with special needs. This provision has alleviated a significant barrier to adoption, helping middle class families for whom adoption may have been prohibitively expensive and making it easier for families to adopt children with special needs. Since President Clinton took office, the number of children with special needs who have been adopted with federal adoption assistance has risen by 60 percent. This year, in signing the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, President Clinton ensured more support for families who adopt children with the \$500 Per-Child Tax Credit.

GIVING STATES FLEXIBILITY AND SUPPORT. To test innovative strategies to improve child welfare systems, the Clinton Administration has granted child welfare waivers to California, Delaware, Indiana, Illinois, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio and Oregon, giving the states more flexibility in tailoring services to meet the needs of children and families. Up to two more states will receive approval for waivers under previous authority. Under the new Adoption and Safe Families Act, HHS will grant up to 10 waivers per year to states. In addition, this Administration has provided states with enhanced technical support and helped improve court operations. In September, HHS awarded 40 demonstration grants totalling \$7.9 million, to states, local agencies, courts, private organizations, and others committed to promoting adoption for innovative programs to increase adoptions and reduce the number of children in foster care. To prevent children from entering foster care in the first place, in 1993, the Clinton Administration secured federal funding for the Family Preservation and Family Support Program to help states, local governments and service providers develop effective programs to serve children and families at risk.

BREAKING DOWN RACIAL AND ETHNIC BARRIERS TO ADOPTION. The Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, also ensures that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity by strengthening the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act which the President signed in 1994.

PROVIDING SUPPORTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND ADOPTION. In 1993, President Clinton signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act which enables parents to take time off to adopt a child without losing their jobs or health insurance. In addition, the welfare reform bill that the President signed into law maintains the guarantee of child protection and adoption, and does not reduce funds for child welfare, child abuse, foster care and adoption services.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS. Through speeches, writings, events and public service announcements, the President and First Lady have promoted the importance and benefits of adoption.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 14, 1996

December 14, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
THE SECRETARY OF LABOR
THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL
MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT: Steps to Increase Adoptions and Alternate
Permanent Placement for Waiting Children
in the Public Child Welfare System

During this Holiday Season, as we reflect on the importance of family in our own lives, let us remember the tens of thousands of our Nation's children in the public child welfare system who live without permanent and caring families. Foster care provides temporary shelter and relief for children who have been abused or neglected.

I am committed to giving the children waiting in our Nation's foster care system what every child in America deserves -- loving parents and a healthy, stable home. The goal for every child in our Nation's public welfare system is permanency in a safe and stable home, whether it be returning home, adoption, legal guardianship, or another permanent placement. While the great majority of children in foster care will return home, for about one in five, returning home is not an option, and they will need another home, one that is caring and safe. These children wait far too long -- typically over 3 years, but for many children much longer -- to be placed in permanent homes. Each year, State child welfare agencies secure homes for less than one-third of the children whose goal is adoption or an alternate permanent placement. I know we can do better.

I believe we should increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system each year toward the goal of at least doubling that number by the year 2002. Returning home is not an option for about 100,000 of the over 450,000 children in the Nation's foster care system, yet only approximately 20,000 were adopted last year and approximately 7,000 were permanently placed in legal guardianships. While the number of adoptions each year has been constant for many years, I believe that by working with States to identify and break down barriers to permanent placements, setting annual numerical targets, rewarding successful performance, and raising public awareness, we can meet the target of at least 54,000 children adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system by the

year 2002.

Today, therefore, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to report to me within 60 days on actions to be taken to move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes and at least to double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed out of the public foster care system.

- I. To increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year, this report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:
 - (a) Plans to work with States on setting and reaching State specific numerical targets, using the technical assistance of the Department of Health and Human Services National Resource Centers to make information on best practices available to States and to engage community leaders, parents, and the business and faith communities;
 - (b) Proposals to provide per child financial incentives to States for increases in the number of adoptions from the public welfare system. Options considered should have little to no net costs, as increases in the number of adoptions from the public system will reduce foster care costs, thereby offsetting much if not all of the incentive payments;
 - (c) A proposal to ensure continued aggressive implementation of the Multi-ethnic Placement Act, as amended by the Inter-ethnic Adoption Provision of the Small Business Job Protection Act;
 - (d) Plans to compile and publish an annual State-by-State report on success in meeting the numerical targets; and
 - (e) Plans to recognize successful States.
- II. To move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes, the report shall also recommend changes to Federal law and regulations and other actions needed to emphasize the importance of planning for permanency as soon as a child enters the foster care system. The Secretary's report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:
 - (a) Plans to provide States with funding to identify barriers to permanency and to develop targeted strategies to find permanent homes for children who have been in foster care a particularly long time;
 - (b) Proposals to shorten the period of time between a child's placement in foster care and his or her initial hearing at which a permanency determination is made;

- (c) A proposal to clarify that the purpose of "dispositional hearings" is to plan for permanency and, as appropriate, to consider referrals for family mediation, termination of parental rights, adoption, legal guardianship, or other permanent placements;
- (d) A proposal to clarify the "reasonable efforts" requirement and other Federal policy as it relates to permanency and safety;
- (e) Plans to ensure that States give appropriate weight to permanency planning by establishing standards for securing permanency through adoption or guardianship, once a decision has been made that a child cannot be returned home; and
- (f) Plans to examine alternative permanency arrangements, such as guardianship, when adoption is not possible.

Last month, I signed a proclamation designating November as National Adoption Month -- a time to increase awareness about the tens of thousands of children waiting for families and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards and responsibilities of adoption. However, adoption must be a national concern throughout the year. Therefore, I direct:

- (a) The Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and lead a public awareness effort, including use of public service announcements, print materials, and the Internet;
- (b) The Secretaries of Health and Human Services and the Treasury in consultation with State, civic, and private sector leaders to develop and disseminate information about the new adoption tax credits and other adoption benefits;
- (c) The Secretaries of Labor and Commerce, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to identify and recognize companies in the private sector with model policies to encourage and ease adoption among employees; and
- (d) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management to direct all Federal agencies to provide information and support to Federal employees who are prospective adoptive parents.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 14, 1999

PRESIDENT CLINTON SIGNS LANDMARK LAW
TO HELP FOSTER CARE YOUTH PREPARE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

December 14, 1999

President Clinton today will sign into law the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. This legislation, based on an initiative proposed by the President and the First Lady, will help ensure that young people who leave foster care get the tools they need to make the most of their lives. It empowers those leaving foster care by providing them better educational opportunities, access to health care, training, housing assistance, counseling and other services. The new law is only the latest instance of the Administration's longstanding commitment to children and families.

FOSTER CARE YOUTH FACE CHALLENGES AS THEY ENTER ADULTHOOD. Nearly 20,000 young people leave foster care each year when they reach age 18 without an adoptive family or other guardian. Without the emotional, social and financial support that families provide, many of these youth find themselves inadequately prepared for life on their own. Studies show that within two to four years of leaving foster care, only half have completed high school, fewer than half are employed, one-fourth have been homeless for at least one night, 30 percent do not have access to needed health care, 60 percent of the women have given birth, and less than one in five are completely self-supporting.

NEW LEGISLATION PROVIDES NEW HOPE FOR THESE YOUTH. Under previous laws, federal financial support for these young people ended just as they were making the transition to independence. The Act the President will sign today authorizes \$700 million over five years to help these young people cross this critical bridge:

Doubling the Federal Independent Living Program. The Independent Living program, run through the states, helps older foster care children earn a high school diploma, participate in vocational training or education, and learn daily living skills such as budgeting, career planning and securing housing and employment. Today's new law doubles the program's funding to \$140 million per year, and invests \$350 million more over five years in these services. Under the new law, states are now required to serve youth up to 21 years old, enabling more young people to obtain a college education. It also enables states to provide time-limited financial assistance to help these youth with living expenses as they develop the skills and education needed to move successfully into the workforce. The Act the President will sign today also renames the program in honor of John Chafee, the late Senator who so effectively championed the needs of children.

Providing Health Insurance. Today, when young people emancipate from foster care, they face numerous health risks, but too often lose their health insurance. The new law grants states the option for these young people to remain eligible for Medicaid up to age 21. Today, HHS will issue guidance to all State Medicaid Directors encouraging them to take up this option.

Honoring America's Heroes. In an unrelated provision, the Act provides a special monthly cash benefit to Filipino veterans who served under the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II if they were eligible for

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and later choose to move outside the United States. Previously, Filipino veterans who were eligible to receive SSI benefits would lose them if they were to return to the Philippines.

A RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION. With today's new law, the Administration adds to an unprecedented record of promoting the well-being of children and providing them permanent, loving homes. In 1998 there were a record 36,000 adoptions from foster care, the first significant increase in the history of the program. From 1996 to 1998, the number of adoptions nationwide rose 29 percent -- from 28,000 to 36,000 -- and is on a pace to meet the President's goal of 56,000 adoptions in 2002. Among the President's other steps to improve child welfare and encourage adoption:

Increasing the Transitional Living Program. Last month the President secured in the budget agreement a 40 percent increase in the Transitional Living program, which provides funds to local community-based organizations for residential care, life skills training, and other support services to homeless adolescents. The program will now be funded at \$20.7 million.

Enacting the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. Based on the Administration's Adoption 2002 report, this landmark law made the health and safety of children a clear priority, provided the first-ever financial incentives for states to increase adoptions, tightened the time frames for making permanent placements of children, and removed other barriers to adoption.

Making Adoption Affordable. In 1996, President Clinton enacted a \$5,000 tax credit for families adopting children, and a \$6,000 tax credit for families adopting children with special needs. In the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, the President provided more support for families who adopt with a \$500 per-child tax credit. And under the Family and Medical Leave Act, parents can take time with a newly adopted child without losing their jobs or health insurance.

Breaking Down Racial and Ethnic Barriers to Adoption. New inter-ethnic adoption provisions signed into law by the President ensure that the adoption process is free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity.

Giving States Flexibility and Support. The Clinton Administration has given 25 states waivers to test innovative strategies for improving state child welfare systems. The Administration has provided states technical support to improve court operations and grants to support local adoption projects, and has also secured federal funding for the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program to serve at-risk children and families.

Using the Internet to Promote Adoption. In November 1998, the President issued a directive to the Department of Health and Human Services to expand the use of the Internet as a tool to find homes for children waiting to be adopted from foster care. HHS will develop a national Internet site by the year 2002.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Vice President
(Athens, Greece)

For Immediate Release

November 20, 1999

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Hillary and I are very pleased that the Congress today approved H.R. 3443, the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. This legislation helps ensure that young people in foster care get the tools they need to make the most of their lives. It builds on proposals in my budget to empower those leaving foster care, by providing them access to health care, better educational opportunities, training, housing assistance, counseling, and other support and services. We cannot let these young people walk their tough road alone.

Each year, approximately 20,000 18 year-olds leave our nation's foster care system without an adoptive family or other permanent family relationship. Without the emotional, social, and financial support that families provide, many of these young people are not adequately prepared for life after foster care. Unfortunately, federal financial support ends just as they are making the critical transition to independence. This bill addresses that problem and will help these youth in their effort to become successful, independent adults.

I am also pleased that the Act provides additional funds for the adoption incentive payments, which are bonuses to the states for increasing the number of children adopted from public foster care. This additional funding will enable states to receive the full amount of the bonuses they have earned through outstanding performance.

Today's legislation is a fitting tribute to the late Senator John Chafee, who was a chief sponsor of the Act. A fierce champion of children, Senator Chafee paid particular attention to our nation's most vulnerable young people. I am pleased that the bill renames the Independent Living Program in his honor.

I would also like to thank the House and Senate Leadership, as well as Representatives Nancy Johnson and Ben Cardin, Chairman William Roth, Jr., and Senators Jay Rockefeller, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Charles Grassely, John Breaux, James Jeffords, Jack Reed, and Susan Collins for their hard work and dedication to this issue. I look forward to signing this bill into law.

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Food ~~Safety~~

meat, poultry, and seafood products. The President has also created a Food Safety Council, which is now developing a comprehensive plan to ensure the safety of the nation's food supply into the 21st century.

CLINTON-GORE ADMINISTRATION: A RECORD OF IMPROVING FOOD SAFETY

To ensure that our food supply remains among the safest in the world, the Clinton-Gore Administration has made reducing food-borne illness a national priority. The Administration has put in place improved safety standards for meat, poultry, and seafood products, and developed enhanced standards for fruit and vegetable juices. Research, education, and surveillance efforts have also been greatly expanded. Significant milestones in the Administration's efforts:

December Announced Egg Safety Action Plan that will cut in half by 2005 the number of 1999 Salmonella Enteritidis (SE) illnesses attributed to eggs, and will set a goal of eliminating such illnesses altogether by 2010.

July 1999 Announced efforts to improve egg safety by requiring that shell eggs be stored at 45 degrees Fahrenheit or below during transport, in warehouses, and at retail stores - and by requiring safe handling statements on egg cartons.

July 1999 Directed the Department of HHS and the Treasury Department to explore additional actions to protect consumers from unsafe imported foods.

Jan. 1999 Implemented new science-based inspection system called Hazard Analysis-Critical Control Points (HACCP) in almost 3,000 small meat and poultry plants.

Oct. 1998 Published guidance for growers, packers, and shippers of fresh fruits and vegetables to provide information on good agricultural and management practices.

Aug. 1998 Created the President's Food Safety Council, charged with developing a strategic plan for federal food safety activities and ensuring that all relevant agencies work together to develop coordinated food safety budgets each year.

July 1998 Announced Joint Institute for Food Safety Research, which will develop a strategic plan for conducting and coordinating all federal food safety research activities, including with the private sector and academia.

Announced new warning labels on packaged fresh fruit and vegetable juices that have not been processed to prevent, reduce, or eliminate illness-causing microbes.

May 1998 Formed national computer network of public health laboratories, called PulseNet," to help rapidly identify and stop outbreaks of food-borne illness. The new system enables epidemiologists to respond up to five times faster than before in identifying serious and widespread food contamination problems by performing DNA "fingerprinting" on food-borne pathogens.

Feb. 1998 Announced proposed food safety budget, which requests approximately \$101 million increase for food safety initiatives.

Jan. 1998 Implemented new, science-based HACCP system for 300 largest meat and poultry plants.

Dec. 1997 Approved irradiation of meat products to control

disease-causing microorganisms. Implemented seafood HACCP regulations for all seafood processors.

Oct. 1997 Ordered additional actions to improve the safety of domestic and imported fruit and vegetables.

Established Partnership for Food Safety Education, an ambitious federal-private partnership to reduce food-borne illness by educating Americans about safe food handling practices. The Partnership has launched a multi-year, broad-based public education campaign to teach Americans about safe food-handling practices.

May 1997 Announced comprehensive new initiative to improve the safety of nation's food supply --"Food Safety from Farm to Table"--detailing a \$43 million food safety program, including measures to improve surveillance, outbreak response, education, and research.

Jan. 1997 Unveiled National Food Safety Initiative, a five-point plan working with consumers, producers, industry, states, universities, and the public to strengthen and improve food safety.

Announced new early warning system, the Food-borne Outbreak Response Coordinating Group (FORC-G), a partnership of federal and state agencies, to develop a comprehensive, coordinated national food-borne illness outbreak response system to increase coordination and communication among federal, state, and local agencies; guide efficient use of resources and expertise during an outbreak; and prepare for new and emerging threats to the U.S. food supply.

Aug. 1996 President signed Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996, which requires drinking water systems to protect against dangerous contaminants such as *Cryptosporidium* and gives people the right to know about contaminants in their tap water.

President Clinton signed Food Quality Protection Act of 1996, which streamlines regulation of pesticides by FDA and EPA and puts important new public-health protections in place, especially for children.

July 1996 Announced new HACCP regulations that modernize the nation's meat and poultry inspection system for the first time in 90 years. New standards help prevent *E. coli* bacteria contamination in meat.

Jan. 1996 The Food-borne Diseases Active Surveillance Network (FoodNet), a collaborative effort among HHS and USDA, along with state health departments and local investigators around the country, begins collecting data to better track the incidence of food-borne illness and monitor the effectiveness of food safety programs in reducing food-borne illness.

Dec. 1995 Issued new rules to ensure seafood safety, using HACCP regulatory programs to require food industries to design and implement preventive measures and increase the industries' responsibility for and control of their safety assurance actions.

1994 Embarked on CDC strategic program to detect, prevent, and control emerging infectious disease threats, some of which are food-borne, making significant progress toward this goal in each successive year.

Reorganized USDA to establish Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety. This increases the visibility of food safety within USDA and separates food safety functions from marketing functions carried out by other parts of USDA. Reorganization also creates a new Office of Public Health and Science within FSIS to improve the scientific base needed to make sound regulatory decisions, based on public health.

1993 Vice-President Gore's National Performance Review issued a report recommending that government and industry move toward a system of preventive controls for food safety.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 6, 2000

PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES AGGRESSIVE FOOD SAFETY STRATEGY TO COMBAT
LISTERIA IN HOT DOGS AND OTHER READY-TO-EAT FOODS

In his radio address today, President Clinton will announce an aggressive new strategy to significantly reduce the risk of food-borne illnesses caused by *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat foods such as hot dogs and lunch meats. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2,518 people each year become ill from *Listeria* -- and 20 percent of cases result in death. Food-borne listeriosis has particularly high fatality rates for newborns, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems. The President today will direct the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services to take a range of actions, including new regulations, to cut the risk of illness and death from *Listeria*. He will also push Congress to fully fund his food safety initiative and criticize Congress for voting just this week to undermine that initiative.

TAKING ACTION TO REDUCE ILLNESSES FROM READY-TO-EAT FOODS. Today President Clinton will announce an aggressive new interagency effort to combat food-borne illness caused by *Listeria*. In particular, the President will direct USDA to complete proposed regulations that include any appropriate microbiological testing and other measures by industry to: 1) prevent cross-contamination in the processing environment; 2) ensure that the processing of ready-to-eat products meets appropriate standards; and 3) ensure that such products are safe throughout their shelf life. In addition, the President will direct HHS to develop an action plan identifying further steps to reduce *Listeria* contamination, including identification of control measures for at-risk foods and the publication of guidance to processors, retailers, and food service facilities. Finally, both USDA and HHS will consider the need for enhanced labeling to provide additional consumer safeguards. The Administration's goal is to cut in half, by the year 2010, the number of illnesses caused by *Listeria* (from 0.5 to 0.25 cases per 100,000). Today's actions should enable the Administration to reach this goal five years early.

CALLING ON CONGRESS TO SUPPORT HIS FOOD SAFETY INITIATIVES. Just this week, Congressional committees voted to block funding for the President's food safety initiative. The President today will urge Congress to provide the full \$68 million increase he has requested for the initiative, which would, among other things, protect millions of Americans from the dangers of salmonella poisoning in eggs and enable FDA to expand the number of inspections of imported and certain domestic foods. The President also will call on Congress to pass two key pieces of food safety legislation. One bill, sponsored by Senators Mikulski, Kennedy, and Durbin and Rep. Eshoo, ensures that imports of fruits, vegetables, and other food products meet U.S. food safety requirements. The second bill, sponsored by Sen. Harkin, gives USDA authority to issue mandatory recalls and impose civil penalties for unsafe meat and poultry.

BUILDING ON A STRONG RECORD OF ENSURING FOOD SAFETY. The Clinton Administration has made food safety a high priority by seeking substantial funding for such initiatives as a nationwide early-warning system for food-borne illness, increased inspections, and the expansion of food-safety research, risk assessment and education. The Administration has put into place improved science-based standards for

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 11, 1999

PRESIDENT CLINTON UNVEILS NEW MEASURES
TO IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF EGGS AND IMPORTED FOODS

Today the President will announce an aggressive plan to improve the safety of the eggs we eat and to clamp down on importers of unsafe foods. The Egg Safety Action Plan aims to cut in half by 2005 the number of Salmonella Enteritidis (SE) illnesses attributed to eggs, and will set a goal of eliminating such illnesses altogether by 2010. Nearly 3.3 million eggs in the U.S. are infected with the SE bacteria annually, and in 1997 alone, there were an estimated 300,000 cases of SE infections. The estimated costs of these illnesses are as high as \$870 million each year. The President today will also announce new steps to target unscrupulous importers who attempt to move unsafe food into U.S. markets. These new steps were developed as a result of the President's directive to the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Treasury to protect consumers from unsafe imported foods.

TAKING ACTION TO REDUCE EGG-RELATED ILLNESSES. Today the President will announce plan that aims to cut by 50 percent the number of egg-associated SE illnesses by the year 2005. The Egg Safety Action Plan addresses systems and practices at each stage of the farm-to-table continuum to reduce eggs as a source of SE infection. The plan permits egg producers, packers, and processors to choose between two strategies, each providing consumers with equivalent levels of safety:

Strategy I focuses on producers at the farm level, requiring rigorous on-farm agricultural and sanitation practices, extensive testing for SE, and egg diversion systems, so that infected eggs are rerouted or "diverted" away from consumers.

Strategy II focuses on the processing and packing stages, requiring that SE-infected eggs receive lethal treatments, also known as a "kill step," so that the SE bacteria are eliminated in infected eggs. Strategy II recognizes the implementation of new technologies such as "in shell pasteurization" to kill the SE bacteria.

The Plan also specifies safe handling practices at the distribution and retail stages to help ensure that consumers receive safe eggs and egg products. In addition, the plan clearly describes the surveillance, research, and education activities that must also be conducted to achieve the target of elimination of egg-associated SE illnesses.

CLAMPING DOWN ON IMPORTERS OF UNSAFE FOODS. In July, the President issued a directive to the Departments of Health and Human Services and Treasury to develop a plan to prevent the import of unsafe food. Today the President will announce that plan, which sets forth timeframes to:

Prevent distribution of unsafe food by requiring that import shipments be stored in secure facilities at the importers' expense until released by FDA and Customs;

Identify and destroy foods that have been refused entry due to a serious public health and/or safety violation. It is anticipated that the estimated 1,500 annual destructions will prevent re-entry at another port in the U.S. or distribution in another country;

Label refused food shipments and accompanying paperwork to indicate that

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 6, 2000

May 5, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

SUBJECT: REDUCING THE RISK OF LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES

Food safety is a vital issue for all Americans. When people across this country sit down to a meal at home or in a restaurant, they expect that the food they eat will be safe. While the U.S. food supply is abundant, the marketplace has evolved from one dominated by minimally processed basic commodities for home preparation to one with an array of highly processed products that are ready-to-eat or require minimal preparation in the home.

To take account of the changes in the way Americans eat and to ensure that America's food supply remains safe, my Administration has made wide-ranging, dramatic improvements in food safety. We have worked successfully to revolutionize our meat and poultry inspection system, instituting scientific testing and pathogen reduction controls to target and reduce dangerous pathogens like Salmonella and E. coli O157:H7 and the illnesses they cause. We also have implemented an innovative system of preventative controls for the seafood industry, published industry guidance to improve the safety of fruits and vegetables, and taken steps to prevent unsafe imported foods from reaching American consumers. My Food Safety Initiative is now in its third year of improving food safety surveillance, outbreak response, education, research, and inspection. In 1998, I issued an Executive Order creating the President's Council on Food Safety (Council), which oversees Federal food safety research efforts and is currently developing a comprehensive, national food safety strategic plan. It is under the Council's auspices that my Administration produced last year an Egg Safety Action Plan with the goal of eliminating illnesses from Salmonella Enteritidis in eggs. Additionally, we launched a high-tech early warning system called PulseNet that uses DNA-fingerprinting techniques to help us better detect and prevent outbreaks of foodborne illness.

These and other efforts have helped to make meaningful improvements in food safety. But we can do even more. Millions of Americans get sick from eating contaminated food each year. With changing patterns of food production and consumption, we must continue to aggressively meet the food safety challenges of the 21st century.

One challenge we must address immediately is that of Listeria monocytogenes, which can cause a severe infection called listeriosis. Listeriosis is a significant public health concern, and is especially lethal, resulting in death in about 20 percent of cases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 2,518 persons become ill and 504 persons die each year from listeriosis. Pregnant women with listeriosis can pass the infection on to their unborn children, potentially resulting in severe illness or death to the fetus or newborn infant. Others at high risk for severe disease or death are the elderly

and those with weakened immune systems. Ready-to-eat food products, such as lunch meats, smoked fish, certain types of soft cheeses, and hot dogs, are among the foods most commonly associated with food-related illness from *Listeria*. To address this serious public health problem, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture (USDA), is conducting a risk assessment on *Listeria monocytogenes* to determine which foods warrant further preventive measures. This risk assessment will be completed shortly, and I believe we must build on what is already being done to target this deadly organism.

My Administration's goal -- articulated in our Healthy People 2010 plan -- is to cut the number of illnesses caused by *Listeria* in half by 2010, from 0.5 cases to 0.25 cases per 100,000. To meet and exceed this goal, I hereby direct you, in cooperation and consultation with the Council and relevant Federal agencies, to report back to me within 120 days on the aggressive steps you will take to significantly reduce the risk of illness and death by *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat foods. In particular, within this time period, I direct the Secretary of Agriculture to complete proposed regulations that include any appropriate microbiological testing and other industry measures to: 1) prevent cross-contamination in the processing environment; 2) ensure that the processing of ready-to-eat products meets appropriate standards; and 3) ensure that such products are safe throughout their shelf life. In addition, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, within this time frame, to develop an action plan identifying additional steps necessary to reduce *Listeria monocytogenes* contamination. This plan should include consideration of control measures for at-risk foods and the publication of guidance for processors, retailers, and food service facilities. Finally, you should consider whether enhanced labeling is necessary to provide additional safeguards for consumers. These actions should be based in science and should establish the foundation for a comprehensive approach that significantly reduces the opportunity for *Listeria* product contamination and *Listeria*-related illnesses to occur. All these actions, taken together, should allow us to achieve our Healthy People Goal by 2005 rather than 2010.

These steps will continue to ensure the safety of America's food supply and will help protect some of the Nation's most vulnerable populations from foodborne illness.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts)

For Immediate Release

August 25, 1998

EXECUTIVE ORDER 13100

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PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON FOOD SAFETY

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to improve the safety of the food supply through science-based regulation and well-coordinated inspection, enforcement, research, and education programs, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment of President's Council on Food Safety.

(a) There is established the President's Council on Food Safety ("Council"). The Council shall comprise the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Human Services, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology/Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, and the Director of the National Partnership for Reinventing Government. The Council shall consult with other Federal agencies and State, local, and tribal government agencies, and consumer, producer, scientific, and industry groups, as appropriate.

(b) The Secretaries of Agriculture and of Health and Human Services and the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology/Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall serve as Joint Chairs of the Council.

Sec. 2. Purpose. The purpose of the Council shall be to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Federal food safety activities, taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences report "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption" and other input from the public on how to improve the effectiveness of the current food safety system. The Council shall make recommendations to the President on how to advance Federal efforts to implement a comprehensive science-based strategy to improve the safety of the food supply and to enhance coordination among Federal agencies, State, local, and tribal governments, and the private sector. The Council shall advise Federal agencies in setting priority areas for investment in food safety.

Sec. 3. Specific Activities and Functions. (a) The Council shall develop a comprehensive strategic Federal food safety plan that contains specific recommendations on needed changes, including measurable outcome goals. The principal goal of the plan should be the establishment of a seamless, science-based food safety system. The plan should address the steps necessary to achieve this goal, including the key public health, resource, and management issues regarding food safety. The planning process should consider both short-term and long-term issues including new and emerging threats and the special needs of vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. In developing this plan, the Council shall consult with all interested parties, including State and local agencies, tribes, consumers, producers, industry, and academia.

(b) Consistent with the comprehensive strategic Federal food safety plan described in section 3(a) of this order, the Council shall advise agencies of priority areas for investment in food safety and ensure that Federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets for submission to the OMB that sustain and strengthen existing capacities, eliminate duplication, and ensure the most effective use of resources for improving food safety. The Council shall also ensure that Federal agencies annually develop a unified budget for submission to the OMB for the President's Food Safety Initiative and such other food safety issues as the Council determines appropriate.

(c) The Council shall ensure that the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research (JIFSR), in consultation with the National Science and Technology Council, establishes mechanisms to guide Federal research efforts toward the highest priority food safety needs. The JIFSR shall report to the Council on a regular basis on its efforts: (i) to develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research activities consistent with the President's Food Safety Initiative and such other food safety activities as the JIFSR determines appropriate; and (ii) to coordinate efficiently, within the executive branch and with the private sector and academia, all Federal food safety research.

Sec. 4. Cooperation. All actions taken by the Council shall, as appropriate, promote partnerships and cooperation with States, tribes, and other public and private sector efforts wherever possible to improve the safety of the food supply.

Sec. 5. General Provisions. This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, nor does it, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers or any person. Nothing in this order shall affect or alter the statutory responsibilities of any Federal agency charged with food safety responsibilities.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE,
August 25, 1998.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 3, 1999

July 3, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

SUBJECT: Safety of Imported Foods

While the United States has one of the safest food supplies in the world, outbreaks of foodborne illness are still all too prevalent. Millions of Americans are stricken by illness each year from foods they consume, and thousands, mostly the very young and the elderly, die as a result. The threats come from a variety of sources, including both imported and domestically produced foods.

Foodborne illness is difficult to control in a changing world. Consumers enjoy a greater variety of foods than they did 50 years ago, including a greater emphasis on food from all around the world. Americans also eat more foods prepared outside their homes, such as foods prepared in grocery stores, restaurants, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and day care centers. We also are seeing the emergence of new foodborne pathogens such as the highly virulent E. Coli O157:H7.

For these reasons, my Administration has made food safety a high priority. I have requested substantial annual increases to fund food safety initiatives such as a nationwide early warning system for foodborne illness, increased inspections, and the expansion of food safety research, risk assessment, and education. In January of 1997, I directed the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to identify specific steps to improve the safety of the food supply. In October of 1997, I expanded my initiative to provide special emphasis on the safety of domestic and imported fruits and vegetables. Last year at this time, I announced the creation of a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research (JIFSR) to develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research and efficiently coordinating all Federal food safety research. In August of 1998, I issued an Executive order to create the President's Council on Food Safety, which is charged with (1) developing a comprehensive plan for all Federal food safety activities, (2) advising agencies of food safety priorities and developing coordinated food safety budgets, and (3) overseeing the JIFSR. We have made significant steps domestically to help ensure the safety of our food supply.

Today, I am expanding my Administration's food safety efforts even further to focus on the safety of imported foods. While the majority of imported food is safe, problems do exist. These problems are the result of two major changes. At the turn of the century, relatively few foods were imported, but today, we are seeing a dramatic increase in the importation of foods. Imports have doubled over the past 7 years and, based on recent trends, we expect at least an additional 30 percent increase by 2002. Finished and fully packaged food products account for an increasing proportion of all imported foods and there has been a huge increase in fresh produce from all over the world.

While there is no evidence that imported foods pose more of a risk than domestic foods and most importers comply with the applicable requirements, there are a few "bad actor" importers who violate the

rules and work to subvert the system. We must give the agencies responsible for food safety the tools necessary to deal with the importers who try to break the rules. While the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) inspects domestic facilities, it has, in conjunction with the United States Customs Service (Customs), relied primarily on border inspection to ensure the safety of imported foods.

I recognize that there are limitations on our resources and statutory authority to take measures to protect consumers against unsafe imported foods. Indeed, there are currently bills before the Congress that would grant explicit authority to improve the safety of imported foods. I applaud these legislative efforts and will continue to work with the Congress to improve our authority and resources.

Nevertheless, consistent with our international obligations, we must take whatever scientifically based steps we can to protect the public health in this area and provide the necessary tools to ensure the safety of imported food. Specifically, I direct you to take all actions available to:

- (1) Prevent distribution of imported unsafe food by means such as requiring food to be held until reviewed by FDA;
- (2) Destroy imported food that poses a serious public health threat;
- (3) Prohibit the reimportation of food that has been previously refused admission and has not been brought into compliance with United States laws and regulations (so called "port shopping"), and require the marking of shipping containers and/or papers of imported food that is refused admission for safety reasons;
- (4) Set standards for private laboratories for the collection and analysis of samples of imported food for the purpose of gaining entry into the United States;
- (5) Increase the amount of the bond posted for imported foods when necessary to deter premature and illegal entry into the United States; and
- (6) Enhance enforcement against violations of United States laws related to the importation of foods, including through the imposition of civil monetary penalties.

Accordingly, I direct you, in consultation with my Food Safety Council and relevant Federal agencies, particularly the Department of Agriculture and the United States Trade Representative, to report back to me within 90 days on the steps you will take in these areas to protect consumers from unsafe imported foods. We must do all that we can to protect Americans from unsafe food.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

(Chapel Hill, North Carolina)

For Immediate Release

October 12, 1993

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

8:24 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much, President Spangler, President Friday, Chancellor Hardin, my good friend, Governor Hunt, and other distinguished platform guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I must say I have thought for a long time about what it might feel to be in a vast crowd of North Carolinians and have them do something besides root against one of my athletic teams from Arkansas. (Laughter.)

I began to think of this moment in August when I was on vacation, and I spent an evening with a person who used to be one of your great sons, James Taylor. (Applause.) And I asked him to sing Carolina in My Mind, so that I could begin to think about what this day might mean to all of us.

Five other presidents have come to this great university to speak. None has every had the opportunity to speak to a crowd like this, on this occasion of your 200th birthday as a university.

I'd like to begin by thanking the students whom I have met, and especially those who gave me this beautiful leather bound book of essays -- three of them -- about the theme for this bicentennial celebration that the students chose -- community. For it is in many ways what ought to be America's theme today, how we can be more together than we are apart.

This university has produced enough excellence to fill a library or lead a nation. And novelists like Thomas Wolfe and Walker Percy. In great defenders of the Constitution like Senator Sam Ervin and Julius Chambers, now one of your Chancellors. And Katherine Everett, a pioneer among women lawyers. And Francis Collins, a scientist who discovered the gene for cystic fibrosis. And journalists like Charles Kuralt and Tom Wicker and Deborah Potter and my Pulitzer Prize-winning friend, Taylor Branch. And leading business men and women like the head of the Small Business Administration in our administration, Erskine Bowles, who's here with me tonight and who, I dare say, is the ablest person ever to hold his position -- probably because of the education he got here at the University of North Carolina. (Applause.) These are just a few of the many thousands of lives who have been brightened by what Mr. Kuralt so warmly referred to as the light and liberty this great university offers.

There are few certainties in this life, but I've also learned that when March madness rolls around, I'll be hoping

my Razorbacks are there, but I know that Dean Smith's Tar Heels will always be there. (Applause.)

As one who grew up in the South, I have long admired this university for understanding that our best traditions call on us to offer that light and liberty to all. Chapel Hill has always been filled with a progressive spirit. Long before history caught up with him, as Mr. Kuralt just said, your legendary president, Frank Porter Graham, spoke this simple but powerful truth: "In the South, two great races have fundamentally a common destiny in building a nobler civilization, and if we go up, we go up together. What a better life we might have had if more had listened to that at a single time. (Applause.)

Your great state has also understood that education goes hand-in-hand with the expansion of democracy and the advancement of our own economy. Under the leadership of men like Luther Hodges and Terry Sanford and Bill Friday, this university joined with your other state's great universities, the state government and the corporate community to begin building an advanced research center to attract new businesses and jobs. Now the Research Triangle has more than 60 companies, more than 34,000 employees, it is the envy of the entire nation of what we can do if we strive to make change our friend.

Tonight we celebrate the day this university began -- the laying of a cornerstone that marks a milestone in the entire American journey, because on this day, near this place, 200 years ago, the cornerstone was laid for the first building in the first university in a nation that had only recently been born.

It was, to be sure, a time of hopeful and historic change, when the future was clear to those who had the vision to see it and the courage to seize it. It was a time of heros such as William R. Davie, a fighter in the Revolution, a framer of the Constitution, a Princeton graduate who wanted a state university here to make education accessible to more than a privileged few.

On October 12th in 1793, when General Davie laid the foundation for this university, he laid a foundation for two centuries of progress in American education.

Historians tell us now that there was then a joyous ceremony -- that "the maple leaves flamed red in the eager air." Great joy there was, but remember now, it was in the face of great uncertainty. The ruins of the Revolutionary War had yet to heal. The debts had yet to be repaid. And a new democracy seemed still untested and unstable. Yet, in spite of all these problems, the Americans of that time had the courage to build what had never before existed -- a great new republic and a public university.

In spite of the obstacles, they decided to bet on the future, not cling to the past. That is the test for us today, my fellow Americans. Alexis de Tocqueville carried this uniquely American optimism, this faith in education, this commitment to change when he wrote in his wondrous Democracy in America: "The Americans have all a lively faith in the perfectibility of man, they judge that the diffusion of knowledge must necessarily be advantageous, and the consequences of ignorance fatal; they all consider society as a body in a state of improvement, humanity as a changing scene, in which nothing is or ought to be permanent; and they admit that what appears to

them today to be good, may be superseded by something better tomorrow."

For two centuries now, we've held fast to that faith in the future. For two centuries we've kept the courage to change. And for two centuries we've believed with Frank Porter Graham, that we must go up together. Our founders pledged their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor to a common cause. We fought a vast and bloody civil war to preserve that common cause. Every battle to expand civil rights has been to deepen and strengthen that common cause -- our ability to go up together.

Now, after 200 years, and after 200 years of this university, we find ourselves a people of more than 150 different racial and ethnic groups confronting a challenge in this new era which tests our belief in the future, tests our courage to change, and tests our commitment to community -- to going up together.

Tonight we can best honor this great university's historic builders and believers, a dozen generations after our nation and this university began by meeting those tests.

The Cold War is over. The threat of nuclear annihilation is receding. Democracy and free markets are on the march. Mandela and de Klerk, Rabin and Arafat have given people hope that peace can come out of any conflict. (Applause.)

A global economy is taking shape in which information and investment move across national borders at stunning speed. And competition for jobs and incomes is intense. Expanding trade is critical to every nation's growth, and our greatest asset is no longer natural resources or material structures -- it is the strength, the skills, the mind and the spirit of our people.

This is a world America has done a very great deal to make. Through two world wars, the Civil War, the Cold War, the establishment of global economic and trading missions, through the attempts to build a United Nations and other instruments of peace and harmony, of progress and democracy. It is full of hope. But as we all know, it is not without its heartbreak.

There is less danger of a nuclear war between two nations, but more danger of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of people irresponsibly prepared to use them. The oppression of Communist control has disappeared, but that disappearance has opened ugly ethnic and religious divisions. The United Nations can do more good than ever before, but clearly there are limits to what outside forces can do to solve severe internal problems in some nations. We cannot withdrawal from this world we have done so much to make, and we must face its difficulties and challenges. Through great trials we have stood with President Yeltsin for democracy, peace and economic reform in Russia. In so doing we have helped the Russians, but we've made ourselves safer and better, too. (Applause.)

We have sponsored and supported the peace process in the Middle East, for which you just clapped. And so doing, of course we have contributed to a better life for the Arabs and the Jews, but we have enhanced our own security as well.

We have helped to save nearly one million Somalis

from death, starvation, anarchy, and strengthened our argument that the world's poor and deprived need not turn to terrorism and violence for regress. In so doing we have advanced our interests, but some of our finest young soldiers have perished.

Tonight before going on, I want to express here in North Carolina, my profound gratitude and deep personal sympathy to the families of the six servicemen from Fort Bragg who were killed in Somalia: Sergeant Daniel Busch, First Class Earl Fillmore, Master Sergeant Gary Gordon, Master Sergeant Timothy Martin, Sergeant First Class Matthew Rierson and Sergeant First Class Randall Schugan (phonetic). May God bless their souls and their families, and may we all thank them. (Applause.)

Our nation is grateful to them, so are most of the people of Somalia. I have ordered strong new steps to protect our troops, to ensure the return of our missing or captive Americans, to complete our mission in that nation in no more than six months, to finish that job quickly, but to finish that job right. (Applause.)

Just as we know we cannot withdraw from the world, we know here at this great university, that we cannot lead the world unless we are first strong at home. After all, in the beginning it was our values, our ideals, our strength, our willingness to work, to make the most of what was here on this continent that made us the envy of the world.

And here at home, this new economy of ours offers much hope and opportunity, yet every positive development seems to bring with it some jarring dislocation. The global economy not only rewards the educated, it punishes the those without education.

Between 1972 and 1992, while the work year got longer for most Americans, our wages stagnated. The 75 percent our people who don't have college degrees felt it profoundly. Those who began, but didn't finish college, saw their wages fall by 9 percent just since 1979. For those who didn't go on to college, wages fell 17 percent. For those who left high school, wages dropped 20 percent. We got a lot of new jobs out of international trade, but we know we also lose some every year to competition from countries with lower wages or higher quality, or sometimes unfair practices.

We know that our health care is the finest in the world, but millions of us are just a pink slip away from losing their health insurance, or one illness away from losing a life savings.

Most of our people are law-abiding citizens who love their families more than their own lives. But America leads the world in violent crime, has the highest percentage of its people behind bars, has 90,000 murders in the last four years and more and more of our children are born into and grow up in family situations so difficult that it is hard even to make the arguments that the rest of us have taken for granted all of our lives.

More and more of our children are growing up in a world in which the future is not what happens when they graduate from the University of North Carolina, but what happens 15 minutes from now. We cannot long survive in a nation with young people for whom the people has no allure and on whom the future has no claim. All of us who come here in gratitude to this great

university, and others like it, are here because we believe in tomorrow. And that must be our urgent task to restore that tomorrow for our young people. (Applause.)

What is the point of all this for today? It is simply this. We are living in a time of profound change. No one can fully see the shape of the change, or imagine with great precision the end of it. But we know a lot about what works and what doesn't. And we know that if we do not embrace this change and make it our friend, if we do not follow what de Tocqueville said we were about 150 years ago, if we do not follow the traditions on which this university was founded, then change will become our enemy. And yet all around our great country today I see people resisting change. I see them turning inward and away from change. And I ask myself why.

At a time when we know it's a matter of fact that every rich country in the world gains many new jobs through expanding trade, I see people saying, "Well even though my industry will get more jobs, we shouldn't have a new trade arrangement with Canada and Mexico which could one day engulf all of Latin America." And when I listen -- when I listen to the arguments, I hear instead of arguments against this agreement, I hear the grievances of the 1980s. The grievances of times when workers were fired without thought, when investments were not made, when people were abused. Instead of a reasoning argument about what will build America tomorrow, I hear a longing for yesterday.

But I tell you my friends, as certainly as it was true 200 years ago today, yesterday is yesterday. If we try to recapture it, we will only lose tomorrow. (Applause.)

But I think we can say we know some things about why we are resisting these changes, and what we might do to make ourselves more like the founders of this great university, more like the founders of our great nation, more like most of the students here on any given day at this university. When do people most resist change? When they are most insecure. Think of any child you ever raised. Think of any personal experience you ever had. Why is it that great universities provide wonderful libraries and beautiful lawns and space and time to study and to learn and to grow? So people can feel personally at peace and secure. It is that which enables us to learn and to grow and to change. And I say to you tonight, my fellow Americans, the mission of this university, the mission of every university, must be to be in the vanguard of helping the American people to recover enough personal security to be able to lead the changes that we are so urgently called on to make. (Applause.)

What does that mean? What does that mean? I would argue among all things, it means at least three: First, we must make Americans more secure in their families and at work. In a world transformed by trade and technology it is no longer possible for a young person to go to work and keep a job until retirement, or even often to stay with the same company. The economy is creating and losing millions of jobs constantly. Most people now who are laid off from their jobs never get the same old job back. Young people beginning their careers, on average, will change work seven times in a lifetime. The best jobs those young people here in the audience may ever have may be jobs yet to be created in companies yet to be founded based on technologies yet to be discovered.

Economic security, therefore, can no longer be found

in a particular job. It must be rooted in a continuing capacity to learn new things. That means we must have a system of life long learning beginning with higher standards in our schools. Almost two decades ago, your Governor, Jim Hunt, began an education reform program that included higher standards in these schools. Those efforts inspired other governors around the country, including the then Governor of South Carolina, now our Education Secretary Dick Riley, and me. And I thank him for that. (Applause.)

Now, we are trying to adopt a whole new approach in our national effort to raise standards in education. We believe the right standard for America isn't whether we are better than we were, but whether we're the best in the world. This cannot be a Democratic or a Republican concern -- it must be an American imperative. We know we have to expect more of our students and our schools, we have to regulate their details less, but hold them to higher standards and measure whether our kids are really learning enough to compete and win in the global economy.

Then we have to insure that every young person in this country has the opportunity to get a college education -- every last one who wants it. (Applause.) We have already this year reorganized the student loan programs to lower interest rates and ease the repayment terms and open the doors of college education to thousands of young people by giving them a chance to be in the National Service Program, to rebuild their communities from the grass roots up, and earn a part of their college education. (Applause.)

For the three-quarters of our young people who do not get four-year college degrees, we must merge the world of learning and the world of work to offer young people classroom training and on-the-job training. And for those who lose their jobs, the unemployment system is no longer good enough. We must create a continuous reemployment system so that people are always learning -- even into their 50s and 60s and 70s, as long as they are willing to be productive citizens and to keep going and growing. (Applause.)

Another big part of job security that is often missed is that most workers are now parents, or at least most parents are now workers. And we can no longer force people to choose between being a good parent and a good worker. (Applause.) They must be able to be both. That is why people who work hard for marginal wages should not be taxed into poverty, but lifted out of it by the tax system, and it is what this government has done. For the first time ever we can say now, if you work 40 hours a week and you have children in your home, you can be lifted out of poverty.

And that is why we have said you ought not to lose your job if you have a sick child or a sick parent. You ought to be able to take a little time off without losing your job because it is important to the fabric of America to stick up for the American family. (Applause.)

A couple of Sundays ago when I came into the White House from my early morning run, I saw a father, a mother and three daughters there taking a tour on Sunday morning, an unusual time. And I went over and said hello to them and learned that the family was there with the Make a Wish Foundation, because one of the daughters was desperately ill and she wanted to see the President and see the White House. I talked to that family for a while and then I came down and had my picture taken with them.

And as I was walking away the father said, "Mr. President, don't you ever think it doesn't matter what goes on up here. If it hadn't been for the family leave law coming in this year, I would have had to chose between spending this time with my precious daughter who may not make it, or working to support my family so that the rest of us could go on. No parent should ever make that choice, and I don't have to now."

That is what I mean by providing the American people the personal security they need to proceed to change in this world. (Applause.)

The second element after education and training of our personal security must be health care. This is the only advanced nation in which people can lose their health care, where we don't have health care that is always there and that can never be taken away. Even though we spend 40 percent more than any place else in the world what does that mean? Lost productivity in small businesses, people really insecure about changing jobs because they've had someone in their family sick and they know if they change jobs that pre-existing condition will keep them from getting new health insurance. So people walk around like this, millions of us all the time, 37.4 million Americans without any health insurance, but many millions more knowing they could lose it like that.

How can you be secure enough to change, to take on new challenges, to start new businesses, to take new risks, if you think that you may have to let your family go without basic health care. My fellow Americans, it does not happen in any other advanced nation, and it is time for us to say as a people it will no longer happen here. No more. (Applause.)

And this last point I would make to you -- if we are to be personally secure enough to make the changes and meet the tests of this time, we must protect our people better against the ravages of violence. Our people have the right to feel safe where they live -- (applause) -- where they go to school and where they work.

My fellow Americans, I was in California the other night and I talked to people all across the state in a hooked up town hall meeting. And this young African American boy, a junior high school student, said, "Mr. President, my brother and I, we don't want to be in gangs, we don't want to have guns, we don't want to cause any trouble. We want to learn, we want a future. And we thought our school was too unsafe, so we decided to go to another school and enroll in it because it was safer. And on the day we showed up to register for school, my brother was standing right in front of me and he was shot," because he got in a crossfire of one of these mindless, arbitrary, endless shootings that occur among children on our streets and in our schools today. We have to stop this. We cannot let those children be robbed of their future. (Applause.)

I know this state grieved recently when your native son Michael Jordan's father was killed. And I know we all wish him well as Michael embarks on a new journey in his life. But let us not forget that 22 other men and women were killed in that same county in your state this year. Ten foreign tourists were killed in Florida this year, and the state grieved over it. But in our nation's capital, in one week this summer, more than twice that many people were killed. They were not famous, but they were the President's neighbors.

It is heartbreaking. What can we do about it? We can put more police on our street. Not to catch criminals just alone, but also to prevent crime. It works. Thirty years ago there were three police for every violent crime. Today there are three crimes for every police officer. We have to give these people the help they need. And when they work the same neighborhoods and walk the same streets and talk to the same kids, they help to prevent crime.

We also -- and I say this in North Carolina, coming from a state where in my home state, half the people have a hunting license or a fishing license or both and we have to shut down factories and schools and towns on the opening day of deer season because nobody shows up anyway. But we still ought to pass the Brady bill so we don't sell guns to people with a criminal or a mental health history. (Applause.)

And we should not allow in city after city after city our police officers to go to work everyday knowing they will walk the mean streets of our cities with people who are better armed than they are. Because this is the only country in the world where teenagers can have assault weapons designed only to kill other people, and use them with abandon on the streets of our cities. We can do better than that.

Do you know, my fellow Americans, that I learned just last week that someone shot today with a bullet is three times more likely to perish because they are likely to have three times as many bullets in them as they did just 15 years ago. It is time for us to stop talking about law and order and thinking about how we can organize ourselves to protect our culture, to protect our heritage, to keep our rights as sportsmen and women, but to protect our kids lives and their future. The time has come to face this problem. (Applause.)

What has all that got to do with this? Because this is what the founders did. They faced the problems of their time and gave the rest of us a chance to live in the most successful democracy ever known. The idea of the public university, born here in North Carolina, played a major role in revolutionizing opportunity for millions and millions and millions of Americans who never even came into this state, but got that opportunity in other states because of the example set here.

This is the challenge of our time and we must meet it so that we can change. Economic security, health care security, personal security -- none of us can be secure until we are prepared to take personal responsibility for making these changes, and of building a new sense of community, each in our own way. Our jobs won't be responsible unless we are willing to learn new skills for a lifetime; and until we all treat each other like indispensable partners, not disposable parts.

Our health care won't be secure even if we pass our health care bill until all of us practice more preventive care. Our families won't be secure until fathers and mothers begin to realize that they have to put their children first. Our communities won't be secure until people who disagree on everything else stop shouting at each other long enough to realize that we have to save the kids who are in trouble the same way we lost them, one child at a time. And it imposes a responsibility on each and every one of us. (Applause.)

But I tell you, my fellow Americans, I honestly believe that as you start the third century of this University's

life we could be looking at the most exciting time America has ever known, if we have the security and the courage to change.

We want to revitalize the American spirit of enterprise and adventure. We want to give our people new confidence to dream those great dreams again, to take those great risks, to achieve those great things.

The security I seek for America is like a rope for a rock climber, to lift those who will take responsibility for their own lives to greater and greater pinnacles. The security I seek is not government doing more for people but Americans doing more for ourselves and for our families, for our communities and for our country. It is not the absence of risk, it is the presence of opportunity. It is not a world without change but a world in which change is our friend and not our enemy.

We honor today the men and women who had the courage to create a new university in a new nation. We must, like them, be builders and believers, the architects of a new security to empower and embolden America and the University of North Carolina on the eve of a new century.

The only difference between America two centuries ago and America today is the difference between dawn and high noon of a very beautiful day.

In the words of your great alumnus, Thomas Wolfe, the true discovery of America is still before us. The true fulfillment of our spirit of our people, of our mighty and immortal land is yet to come. Let us believe in those words and let us act on them, so that 200 years from now our children, 12 generations removed, will still celebrate this glorious day.

Thank you, and God speed. (Applause.)

END8:58 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 6, 1995

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP AND THE
AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Gaston Hall
Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.

11:24 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, my good friend, Father. O'Donovan. You just gave the speech in five minutes, there's nothing for me to say. (Laughter.)

I thank you for welcoming me back. I thank the members of our administration who are here -- Secretary Riley and Deputy Secretary Kunin, Ambassador Raser, Director of the USIA Joe Duffy, Chairman Sheldon Hackney and Jane Alexander; and Penn Kemble, the Deputy Director of the USIA. And I thank my former classmates, some of whom I see out here; and my friends and people around this country who have done so much to try to strengthen the bonds of American citizenship.

Today I want to have more of a conversation than deliver a formal speech about the great debate now raging in our nation, not so much over what we should do, but over how we should resolve the great questions of our time, here in Washington and in communities all across our country. I want to talk about the obligations of citizenship, the obligations imposed on the President and people in power, and the obligations imposed on all Americans.

Two days ago we celebrated the 219th birthday of our democracy. The Declaration of Independence was also clearly a declaration of citizenship: All men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. Among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It was also manifestly a declaration of citizenship in a different way; it was a declaration of interdependence. For the support of this declaration with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence we mutually pledge our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.

The distinguished American historian, Samuel Eliot Morison, in his History of the American People, wrote of these words: "These words are more revolutionary than anything written by Robespierre, Marx or Lennon; more explosive than the atom; a continual challenge to ourselves as well as an inspiration to the oppressed of all the world." What is the challenge to ourselves at the dawn of the 21st century and how shall we meet it? First of all, we must remember that the Declaration of Independence was written as a commitment for all Americans at all times, not just in time of war or great national crisis. My argument to you is pretty straightforward. I believe we

face challenges of truly historic dimensions -- challenges here at home perhaps greater than any we faced since the beginning of this century we are about to finish and the dawn of the industrial era. But they are not greater challenges in their own way than the ones we faced at our birth, greater challenges than those of slavery and civil war, greater than those of World War I or the Depression or World War II. And they can be solved, though they are profound. What are they?

Most people my age grew up in an America dominated by middle class dreams and middle class values -- the life we wanted to live and the kind of people we wanted to be; dreams that inspired those who were born into the middle class; dreams that restrained and directed the lives of those who were much more successful and more powerful; dreams that animated the strivings of those who were poor because of the condition of their birth or because they came here as immigrants; middle class dreams that there would be reward for work and that the future of our children would be better than the lives we enjoyed. Middle class values, strong families and faith, safe streets, secure futures. These things are very much threatened today, threatened by 20 years of stagnant incomes, of harder work by good Americans for the same or lower pay, of increasing inequality of incomes, and increasing insecurity in jobs and retirement and health care.

They are threatened by 30 years of social problems of profound implications -- family break-ups, of a rising tide of violence and drugs, of declining birth rates among successful, married couples, and rising birth rates among young people who are not married. They are threatened by the failure of public institutions to respond; the failure of bureaucracies encrusted in yesterday's prerogatives and not meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow -- the schools, the law enforcement agencies, the governments and their economic and other policies. They are threatened by the sheer pace and scope of change as technology and ideas and money and decisions move across the globe at breathtaking rates, and every great opportunity seems to carry within it the seeds of a great problem.

So that we have anomalies everywhere: Abroad, the Cold War ends, but we see the rise and the threat of technology-based destruction -- sarin gas exploding in the subway in Japan, the bomb exploding in Oklahoma City. The Soviet Union is no more, and so they worry now in the Baltics about becoming a conduit for drug trafficking, and they worry in Russia about their banks being taken over by organized crime.

And here at home, it all seems so confusing -- the highest growth rates in a decades, the stock market at an all-time high, almost 7 million more jobs, more millionaires and new businesses than every before, but most people working harder for less, feeling more insecure.

I saw it just the other day, this cartoon, which you probably can't see, but I'll read it to you. There's a politician -- maybe it's supposed to be me -- (laughter) -- up here giving a speech at a banquet, one of those interminable banquets we all attend. And here's the waiter serving one of the attendees. The politician says: "The current recovery has created over 7.8 million jobs." The waiter says: "And I've got three of them." (Laughter.)

In 1991, as Father O'Donovan said, I came here to Georgetown to talk about these challenges and laid out my philosophy about how we as a people -- not just as a government, but as a people -- ought to meet them. I called it the New Covenant. I will repeat briefly what I said then because I don't believe I can do any better

today than I did then in terms of what I honestly believe we ought to be doing.

I think we have to create more opportunity and demand more responsibility. I think we have to give citizens more say and provide them a more responsive, less bureaucratic government. I think we have to do these things because we are literally a community -- an American family that is going up or down together, whether we like it, or not. If we're going to have middle class dreams and middle class values, we have to do things as private citizens and we have to do things in partnership through our public agencies and through our other associations.

In 1994, when the Republicans won a majority in Congress, they offered a different view which they called their Contract With America. In their view most of our problems were personal and cultural; the government tended to make them worse because it was bureaucratic and wedded to the past and more interested in regulating and choking off the free enterprise system; and, therefore, what we should do is to balance the budget as soon as possible, cut taxes as much as possible, deregulate business completely if possible, and cut our investments in things like welfare as much as possible.

As you know, I thought there were different things that ought to be done because I believed in partnership. I believed in supporting community initiatives that were working and preventing things before they happened, instead of just punishing bad behavior after it occurred, and trying to empower people to make the most of their own lives. So I believed that there were things we could do here in Washington to help, whether it was family leave, or tougher child support enforcement, or reforming the pension system to save the pensions of over 8 million American workers, or investing more in education, making college more affordable.

What I believe grows largely out of my personal history and a lot of it happened to me a long time before I came to Georgetown and read in books things that made me convinced that I was basically right. I grew up in a small town in a poor state. When I was born at the end of World War II, my state's per capita income was barely half the national average. I was the first person in my family to go to college. When I was a boy I lived for a while on a farm without an indoor toilet. It makes a good story -- not as good as being born in a log cabin, but it's true. (Laughter.)

I had a stepfather without a high school diploma and a grandfather, whom I loved above all people almost, who had a sixth-grade education. I lived in a segregated society, and I lived in a family, as has now been well-documented, with problems of alcohol and later, drug abuse. I learned a lot about why I call the New Covenant, about the importance of responsibility and opportunity.

I lived in a family where everybody worked hard and where kids were expected to study hard. But I also had a lot of opportunity that was given to me by my community. I had good teachers and good schools. And when I needed them, I got scholarships and jobs. I saw what happened to good people who had no opportunity because they happened to be black, or because they happened to be poor and white and isolated in the hills and hollows of the mountains of my state.

I saw what happened in my own family to people who were good people, but didn't behave responsibly. My stepfather was very responsible toward me, but not very responsible toward himself. Anybody who's ever lived in a family with an alcoholic knows that

there is nothing you can do for somebody else they are not prepared to do for themselves. And my brother -- after all of his struggles with drug addiction, which included even serving some time in jail, I am sometimes more proud of him than I am of what I've done because he has a family and a son and a life -- not because of the love and support that we all gave him, but because of what he did for himself.

So my whole political philosophy is basically rooted in what I think works. It works for families and communities, and it worked pretty well for our country for a long time.

If you look at recent American history, our country has never been perfect, because none of us are, but we did always seem to be going in the right direction.

I remember when I was a boy in the '50s and '60s -- I remember like it was yesterday when I graduated from high school in 1964, and we had about three-percent unemployment, about three or four-percent real growth, and very modest inflation. And we all just assumed that the American Dream would work out all right if we could ever whip racism. If we could just whip that and make sure all poor people had a chance to work their way into the middle class, we could just almost put this country on automatic. I know that's hard to believe, but that's basically what we thought back then. If we could just somehow lift this awful racial burden off our shoulders and learn how to live together, we could just roll on.

And then in the '60s and the '70s and the '80s, the results got a lot more mixed. Contrary to what a lot of people say now in retrospect, the '60s were not all bad. A lot of good things happened. A lot of people passionately believed that they had a responsibility to help one another achieve the fullest of their God-given potential. And a lot of the important advances in civil rights, and in education, and in fighting poverty really made a difference. But it was also a time when many people began to have such profound cultural clashes that more and more people dropped out and became more self-indulgent.

Contrary to popular retrospect, a lot of good things happened in the '70s. We made a national commitment as a country to defend our environment. This is a safer, cleaner, healthier place because of what we've done for the last 25 years. We decided in a bipartisan way that the workplace ought to be safer, too many people were dying in the workplace. If any of you have ever spent any time in a factory, seen people walking around without all their fingers, you can appreciate that.

But it was also a time when we became profoundly disillusioned because of Watergate and a lot of other things. We really began to suspect that we couldn't trust our leaders or our institutions. And it was the beginning of the decline of middle class dreams for middle class people. In the '60s, the riots in the cities showed that more and more poor people began to doubt whether they would ever be able to work their way into the middle class. In the '70s, people who were in the middle class began to worry about whether they would ever be able to stay or what that meant. It began 20 years ago.

Then in the '80s, it was also a very mixed bag. It was a time when people exalted greed and short-term profit. It was a time when we built in by bipartisan conspiracy in this community the first structural deficit in the history of the United States of America, and exploded our debt while we were reducing our investment in our most profound problems, while we spent the tax cuts and behaved just like the rest of the country, worrying about the

short-run. But it was also a time, let's not forget, where all across the country, there was a renewed awareness of the dangers of drugs and drug use began to go down, smoking declined, volunteerism increased. And there was a remarkable explosion of productivity in the industrial sector in America, and the American economy began to go through the changes necessary to be competitive.

In the '90s, everybody knows, I think, that there's been a sort of a sobering increase in personal values of commitment. You see it in the decline in the divorce rate and the increase in healthy habits among many people. You see more commitment expressed in groups and by individuals all across the country. You see it in people reaffirming their commitment to the families in small and large ways -- the remarkable husband and wife minister team that I introduced in the State of the Union, the Reverend Cherrys and their AME Zion Church near here, now one of the two or three biggest churches in America founded on family outreach. The phenomenal success of this promise-keepers organization -- you can fill any football stadium in America. It's an astonishing thing because people want to do the right thing. And they want to get their families and their lives back together. And that's encouraging.

But let us not forget that these profound problems endure. Middle class dreams and middle class values, the things which have shaped our life and our experience and our expectations, are still very, very much at risk.

I will say again: We have all these aggregate indices that the economy has done well -- almost 7 million new jobs, the stock market's over 4,500. All the things that you know. But while average income has gone up, median income, the person in the middle, has declined in the last two years. A sense of job security has declined with all the downsizing. More and more people are temporary workers. This is the only advanced country in the world where there's a smaller percentage of people under 65 in the work force with health insurance today than 10 years ago.

Millions of American people go home at night from their work and sit down to dinner and look at their children and wonder what they have done wrong, what did they ever do to fail. And they're riddled with worries about it. Millions more who are poor have simply given up on ever being able to work their way into a stable lifestyle. And that, doubtless, is fueling some of the disturbing increase in casual drug use among very young people and the rise in violence among young people.

That threatens middle class values. In almost every major city in America the crime rate is down -- hallelujah. In almost every place in America, the rate of random violence among young people is up, even as the overall crime rate drops. Government is struggling to change, and I'm proud of the changes we have made. But no one really believes that government is fully adjusted to the demands of the 21st century and the information age. It clearly must still be less bureaucratic, more empowering, rely more on incentives, if we still have to reduce spending and we have to find a way to do it while increasing our investment in the things that will determine our ability to live the middle class dreams.

Politics has become more and more fractured, just like the rest of our lives; pluralized. It's exciting in some ways. But as we divide into more and more and more sharply defined organized groups around more and more and more stratified issues, as we communicate more and more with people in extreme rhetoric through mass mailings or sometimes semi-hysterical messages right before election on the telephone, or 30-second ads designed far more to

inflame than to inform, as we see politicians actually getting language lessons on how to turn their adversaries into aliens, it is difficult to draw the conclusion that our political system is producing the sort of discussion that will give us the kind of results we need.

But our citizens, even though their confidence in the future has been clouded and their doubts about their leaders and their institutions are profound, want something better. You could see it in the way they turned out for the town meetings in 1992. You could see it in the overwhelming, I mean literally overwhelming, response that I have received from people of all political parties to the simply act of having a decent, open conversation with the Speaker of the House in Claremont, New Hampshire. People know we need to do better. And deep down inside, our people know this is a very great country capable of meeting our challenges.

So what are the conclusions I draw from this? First of all, don't kid yourself. There are real reasons for ordinary voters to be angry, frustrated and downright disoriented. How could our politics not be confusing when people's lives are so confusing and frustrating and seem to be so full of contradictory developments?

Secondly, this is now, as it has ever been, fertile ground for groups that claim a monopoly on middle class values and old-fashioned virtue. And it's easy to blame the government when people don't feel any positive results. It's easy to blame groups of others when people have to have somebody to blame for their own problems when they are working as hard as they can, and they can't keep up.

But there is real reason for hope, my fellow Americans. This is, after all, the most productive country in the world. We do a better job of dealing with racial and ethnic diversity and trying to find some way to bring out the best in all of our people than any other country with this much diversity in the world.

We have an environment that is cleaner and safer and healthier than it used to be. We still have the lead in many important areas that will determine the shape of societies in the 21st century. There is a real willingness among our people to try bold change. And, most important of all, most Americans are still living by middle class values and hanging on to middle class dreams. And everywhere in this country there are examples of people who have taken their future into their own hands, worked with their friends and neighbors, broken through bureaucracy and solved problems. If there is anything I would say to you it is that. You can find somewhere in America, somebody who has solved every problem you are worried about.

So there is reason for hope. And I would say, to me, the real heroes in this country are the people that are out there making things work and the people who show up for work every day, even though they're barely at and maybe even below the poverty line, but they still work full-time, obey the law, pay their taxes and raise their kids the best they can. That's what this country is really all about. And so there is really no cause for the kind of hand-wringing and cynicism that dominates too much of the public debate today.

What do we have to do now? First of all, we've got to have this debate that is looming over Washington. We have to have it. It's a good thing. We are debating things now we thought were settled for decades. We are now back to fundamental issues that were debated like this 50, 60, 70 years ago. There is a group who believe

that our problems are primarily personal and cultural. Cultural is a -- basically a word that means, in this context, there are a whole lot of persons doing the same bad thing. (Laughter.) And that's what people -- and then if everybody would just sort of straighten up and fly right, why, things would be hunky-dory. And why don't they do it?

Now, I -- you can see that with just two reasons -- I'll give you two examples. And I made you laugh, but let's be serious -- these people are honest and genuine in their beliefs. I will give you two examples that are sort of -- stand out, but there are hundreds more that are more modulated: The NRA's position on gun violence, the Brady Bill and the assault weapons ban.

Their position is guns don't kill people, people do; find the people who do wrong, throw them in jail and throw the key away. Punish wrongdoers. Do not infringe upon my right to keep and bear arms, even to keep and bear arsenals or artillery or assault weapons. Do not do that because I have not done anything wrong and I have no intention of doing anything wrong. Why are you making me wait five days to get a handgun? What do you care if I want an AK-47 or an Uzi to go out and engage in some sort of sporting contest to see who's a better shot? I obey the law. I pay my taxes. I don't give you any grief. Why are you on my back. The Constitution says I can do this. Punish wrongdoers. I am sick and tired of my life being inconvenienced for what other people do.

Second example is the one that dominated the headlines in the last couple of days, what Senator Helms said about AIDS: I'm sick and tired of spending money on research and treatment for a disease that could be ended tomorrow if everybody just straightened up and fly right. I'm tired of it. Why should I spend taxpayer -- I've got a budget to balance. We're cutting aid to Africa. We're cutting education. We're cutting Medicare. Why should we spend money on treatment and research for a disease that is a product of people's wrongdoing? Illicit sex and bad drugs, dirty needles -- let's just stop it.

Now, at one level, forgetting about those two examples, this argument is self-evidently right. Go back to what I told you about my family. A lot of you are nodding your heads about yours. There is a sense in which there is nothing the government can do for anybody that will displace the negative impact of personal misconduct. And unless people are willing to work hard and do the best they can and advance themselves and their families, the ability of common action, no matter how well-meaning, won't work.

You look at every social program that's working in every community -- and there are lots of them. I was just in New Haven for the opening of the Special Olympics, and I spent a lot of time with the LEAP Program up there. It's an incredible program where these college students work with inner-city kids in the cities helping them rebuild their lives. But if the kids don't want to do it and won't behave, there's nothing these college kids can do to help them. So let's give them that. At a certain level, this is self-evidently true.

But what is the problem? These problems are our problems. They're not just single problems. If there's a big crime rate and a whole lot of people getting killed with guns, that affects all the rest of us because some of us are likely to get shot.

Now, I see the Brady Bill in a totally different way because I see these problems as community problems. And I think a public response is all right. And I think saying to people who have

the line I said, I think we ought to say to people, look, it is just not out of line for you to be asked to undergo the minor inconvenience of waiting five days to get a handgun, until we can computerize all the records -- because, look here, in the last year and a half, there are 40,000 who had criminal records or mental health histories who didn't get handguns, and they're not out there shooting people because you went through a minor inconvenience. You don't gripe when you go through a metal detector at an airport anymore, because you are very aware of the connection between this minor inconvenience to you and the fact that that plane might blow up, and you don't want that plane to blow up or be hijacked.

Well, look at the level of violence in America. It's the same thing. I don't have a problem with saying, look, these assault weapons are primarily designed to kill people. That's their primary purpose. And I'm sorry if you don't have a new one that you can take out in the woods somewhere, to a shooting contest, but you'll get over it. Shoot with something else. (Laughter and applause.) It's worth it -- (applause). I'm glad you're clapping. I'm glad you agree with me, but remember, the other people are good people who honestly believe what they say. That's the importance of this debate. It's the attitudes. We have to -- we're having this debate.

The NRA that I knew as a child, the NRA that I knew as a governor, for years, were the people who did hunter education programs, the people what helped me resolve land boundary disputes when retirees would come to the mountains in the northern part of my state and go into unincorporated areas, and who could and couldn't hunt on whose land. And they actually helped save people's lives and they solved a lot of problems. I mean this is a different -- these are deeply-held world views about working -- but the way I look at it is it's like the airport metal detector.

I'll give you another example. It might not be popular in this group. I agree with the Supreme Court decision on requiring people who want to be on high school athletic teams to take drug tests -- not because I think all kids are bad, not because I think they all use drugs, but because casual drug use is going up among young people again. It is a privilege to play on the football team. It is a privilege to be in the band. It is a privilege to have access to all these activities. And I say it's like going through the airport metal detector -- you ought to be willing to do that to help get the scourge of drugs out of your school and keep kids off drugs. That's what I believe, because I see it as a common problem.

So we all have to give up a little and go through a little inconvenience to help solve problems and pull the country together and push it forward. But this is a huge debate.

Look at the AIDS debate. You may think it's a little harder. First of all, the truth is not everybody who has AIDS gets it from sex or drug needles. I've got a picture on my desk at the White House of a little boy named Ricky Ray. He and his family were treated horribly by people who were afraid of AIDS when they first got it through blood transfusions, he and his brother. And he died right after my election. I keep his picture on my table to remember that.

Elizabeth Glaser was a good friend of mine. She and the daughter she lost and her wonderful son that survived her, they didn't get AIDS through misconduct. So that's just wrong. I know a fine woman doctor in Texas who got AIDS because she was treating AIDS patients and she got the tiniest pinprick in her finger -- a million to one, two million to one chance. But, secondly, and more to the

point, the gay people who have AIDS are still our sons, our brothers, our cousins, our citizens. They're Americans, too. They're obeying the law and working hard. They're entitled to be treated like everybody else. (Applause.)

And the drug users -- there's nobody in this country that hates that any more than I do because I've lived with it in my family. But I fail to see why we would want to hasten people's demise because they paid a terrible price for their abuse.

You know, smoking causes lung cancer, but we don't propose to stop treating lung cancer or stop doing research to find a cure. Right? Drunk driving causes a lot of highway deaths, but we don't propose to stop trying to make cars safer. Do we? I don't think so.

So I just disagree with this. Why do we have to make this choice? Why can't we say to people, look, you've got to behave if you want your life to work, but we have common problems and we are going to have some common responses. I don't understand why it's got to be an either-or thing. That's not the way we live our lives. Why should we conduct our public debates in this way?

So -- and the best example of all to me that our problems are both personal and cultural and economic, political and social is the whole condition of the middle class economically. I think it requires public and private decision-making, family values. Most families have them. But most families are working harder for less so they have less time and less money to spend with their children. Now, that's just a fact. That's not good for family values. And I don't believe exhortation alone can turn it around. It's going to require some common action. I think that what we did with the family leave law supported family values. I think that we can have a welfare reform law that requires parental responsibility, has tough work requirements, but invests in child care and supports family values.

I think we can have a tax system that gives breaks to people to help them raise their kids and educate themselves and their children, and that would support family values. I think we can have an education system that empowers people to make the most of their own lives, and I think that is profoundly supportive of family values. And I do not believe the government can do it alone. I believe there are other things that have to be done by people themselves and also by employers.

One of our major newspapers had an article yesterday on the front page, or the day before, saying in the new world economy the employers call all the shots -- talking about how more and more workers were temporary workers, more and more people felt insecure.

You know, it's all very well to exhort people. But if they're out there really busting it, doing everything they can and falling further behind, and they're not being treated fairly by people who can afford to treat them fairly, then that's something else again, isn't it?

The global economy, automation, the decline of unionization, and the inadequate response of too many employers to these changes have led to a profound weakening of the condition of many American workers. There aren't many companies like NUCOR, a nonunion company, a steel company, where people get a fairly low base hourly wage, but they get a weekly bonus; nobody's ever been laid off, every employee with a college kid, student -- a child who's college age gets about \$2,500 a year as a college allowance; and the

pay of the executives is tied to the performance of the company and cannot go up by a higher percentage than the pay of the workers goes up. (Applause.)

Now, by contrast, in the 12 years before I took office -- this is all in the private sector -- the top management of our companies' pay went up by four times their workers' pay went up and three times what their profits went up percentage-wise. And that trend has largely continued; if anything, accelerated, even though we limited the tax subsidy for it in 1993.

So I would say to you that there are some things that mere exhortation to good conduct will not solve, that require other responses that are public or that are private but go beyond just saying these are personal or cultural problems.

I also think that if we want to maintain a public response, there must be a relentless effort to change but not to eviscerate the government. We have tried weak government, nonexistent government, in a complex industrial society where powerful interests that are driven only by short-term considerations call all the shots. We tried it decades and decades ago. It didn't work out very well. It didn't even produce a very good economic policy. It had something to do with the onset of the Depression.

On the other hand, we know that an insensitive, overly bureaucratic, yesterday-oriented, special-interest-dominated government can be just as big a nightmare. We've done what we could to change that. The government has 150,000 fewer people working today than it did when I took office. We've gotten rid of thousands of regulations and hundreds of programs. We have a few shining stars like the Small Business Administration, which today has a budget that's 40 percent lower than it did when I took office, that's making twice as many loans, has dramatically increased the loans to women and minorities, has not decreased loans to white males and hasn't made a loan to a single unqualified person.

We can do these things. I wish I had all day to talk to you about what the Secretary of Education has done in the Education Department to try to make it work better and make common sense, and involve parents, and promote things like greater choice of schools and the building of charter schools and character education in the schools. It's not an either-or thing. You don't have to choose between being personally right and having common goals.

So that's my side of the argument. That's why I think my New Covenant formulation is better to solve the problems of middle class dreams and middle class values than the Republican Contract. But perhaps the most important thing is not whether I'm right or they are, the important thing is how are we going to resolve this and what are citizens going to do. How can we resolve the debate.

I believe -- and you've got to decide whether you believe this -- I believe that a democracy requires a certain amount of common ground. I do not believe you can solve complex questions like this at the grass-roots level or at the national level or anywhere in between if you have too much extremism of rhetoric and excessive partisanship. Times are changing too fast. We need to keep our eyes open. We need to keep our ears open. We need to be flexible. We need to have new solutions based on old values. I just don't think we can get there unless we can establish some common ground.

And that seems to me to impose certain specific responsibilities on citizens and on political leaders. And if I

might, just let me say them. They may be painfully self-evident, but I don't think they're irrelevant. Every citizen in this country's got to say, what do I have to do for myself or my family, or nothing else counts. The truth is that nobody can repeal the laws of the global economy, and people that don't have a certain level of education and skills are not going to be employable in good jobs with long-term prospects. And that's just a fact.

The truth is that if every child in this country have both parents contributing to his or her support and nourishment and emotional stability and education and future, we'd have almost no poor kids, instead of having over 20 percent of our children born in poverty. Those things are true.

The second thing is, more of our citizens have got to say, what should I do in my community. You know, it's not just enough to bemoan the rising crime rate or how kids are behaving and whatever -- that's just not enough. It is not enough. Not when you have example after example after example from this LEAP Program I mentioned, the "I Have a Dream" Program, to the world-famous Habitat for Humanity Program, to all these local initiatives, support corporations, that are now going around the country, revolutionizing slum housing and giving poor, working people decent places to live; to the work of the Catholic social missions in Washington, D.C., and other places.

It is not enough to say that. People have to ask themselves: What should I be doing through my church or my community organizations? People who feel very strongly about one of the most contentious issues in our society, abortion, ought to look at the United Pentecostal Church. They'll adopt any child born, no matter what race, no matter how disabled, no matter what their problems are. There is a positive, constructive outlet for people who are worried about every problem in this country if they will go seek it out. And there is nothing the rest of us can do that will replace that kind of energy.

The fourth thing that I think -- the third thing I think citizens have to do that is also important, people have to say, what is my job as a citizen who is a voter? I am in control here. I run the store. I get to throw this crowd out on a regular basis. That's a big responsibility. We're the board of directors of America.

Are we making good decisions? Are we making good decisions? Do we approach these decisions in the right frame of mind? Do we have enough information? Do we know what we're doing? I can tell you, the American people are hungry for information. When I announced my balanced budget and we put it on the Internet, one of our people at the White House told me there were a few hours when we were getting 50,000 requests an hour. The American people want to know things.

So I say to every citizen, do you have the information you need? Do you ever have a discussion with somebody that's different from you? Not just people who agree with you but somebody who's different. You ever listen to one of those radio programs that has the opposite point of view of yours, even if you have to grind your teeth? (Laughter.) And what kind of language do you use when you talk to people who are of different political parties with different views? Is it the language of respect or the language of a suspect? How do you deal with people? This is a huge thing. What do you have to do for yourself and your family? What can you do in your community? What can you do as a citizen?

Thomas Jefferson said he had no fear of the most extreme

views in America being expressed with the greatest passion as long as reason had a chance. As long as reason had a chance. Citizens have to give reason a chance.

What do the political leaders have to do? I would argue four things. Number one, we need more conversation and less combat. Number two, when we differ we ought to offer an alternative. Number three, we ought to look relentlessly at the long-term and remind the American people that the problems we have developed over a long period of years. And, number four, we shouldn't just berate the worst in America, we ought to spend more time celebrating the best.

Those are four things that I think I should do and I think every other leader in this country ought to do. Conversation, not combat is what I tried to do with the Speaker in New Hampshire, and I want to do more of it with others. I'm willing if they are. I think it would be good for America.

Secondly, differ but present an alternative. That's why I presented a balanced budget. A lot of people said, this is dumb politics. The Republicans won the Congress by just saying no: No to deficit reduction, and call it a tax increase. Run away from your own health care plan, say they're trying to make the government take over health care. That may be. But that's because this is a confusing time. It's still not the right thing to do.

Americans don't want "just say no" politics. If they can get the truth, they'll make the right decision 99 times out of 100. And we have to offer an alternative. And so do they. We all should. When we differ, we should say what we're for, not just what we're against.

The third thing is important -- looking for the long-term. I was really said in 1994, I'll be honest with you, on Election Day I was sad. I kind of felt sorry for myself -- I thought, gosh, you know, the real problems in this country are these income problems; and look what we've done with the family leave law; we cut taxes for families with incomes under \$28,000 a year by \$1,000 a year; we've done -- and I reeled it all off. And I said, gosh, I feel terrible. And then I realized, how could they possibly feel anything in two years? These income trends are huge, huge trends. Huge, sweeping over two decades. Fast international forces behind them. Trillions of dollars of money moving across international borders working to find the lowest labor cost and pressing down. Untold improvements in automation -- so fast that you just can't create enough high-wage jobs to overcome the ones that are being depressed in some sectors of the economy. These are a huge deal. How could people have felt that?

Nonetheless, our job is not to get reelected, it's to think about the long-term because the problems are long-term problems.

I want to read you what President Havel said in his Harvard commencement speech about this -- more eloquent than anything I could say. "The main task of the present generation of politicians is not, I think, to ingratiate themselves with the public through the decisions they take or their smiles on television. Their role is something quite different -- to assume their share of responsibility for the long-range prospects of our world, and thus, to set an example for the public in whose sight they work. After all, politics is a matter of serving the community which means that it is morality in practice." I could hardly have said it better.

Fourth, maybe the most important thing is, we should not

just condemn the worst, we ought to find the best and celebrate it, and then, relentlessly promote it as a model to be followed. You know, I kept President Bush's Points of Light Foundation when I became President. And we recognize those people every year because I believe in that. I always -- I thought that was one of the best things he did. But I tried to institutionalize it in many ways.

That's what AmeriCorps is all about. The national service program gives young people a chance to earn money for college by working in grass-roots community projects all across the country. When I was in New Haven at the LEAP Program, I had AmeriCorps volunteers there. I was in Texas the other day walking the streets of an inner city and a girl with a college degree from another state was there working with welfare mothers because she was raised by a welfare mother who taught her to go to school, work hard, and get a college degree, and she did.

We have to find a way to systematically see these things that work sweep across this country with high standards and high expectations and breaking through all this bureaucracy that keeps people from achieving. We can do that. And the President ought to do even more than I have done to celebrate the things that work, and I intend to do it and to do more of it.

Now, I believe, obviously, that my New Covenant approach is better than the Republican Contract approach to deal with the problems of middle class dreams and middle class values. But when I ran for this job I said I wanted to restore the American Dream and to bring the American people together. I have now come to the conclusion, having watched this drama unfold here and all around our country in the last two and a half years, that I cannot do the first unless we can do the latter. We can't restore the American Dream unless we can find some way to bring the American people closer together. Therefore, how we resolve these differences is as important as what specific position we advocate.

I think we have got to move beyond the vision and resentment to common ground. We've got to go beyond cynicism to a sense of possibility. America is an idea. We're not one race. We're not one ethnic group. We're not one religious group. We do share a common piece of ground here. But you read the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution: this country is an idea. And it is still going now in our 220th year because we all had a sense of possibility. We never thought there was a mountain we couldn't climb, a river we couldn't ford, or a problem we couldn't solve.

What that great line in the wonderful new movie, Apollo 13, "Failure is not an option." You have to believe in possibility. And if you're cynical, you can't believe in possibility.

We need to respect our differences and hear them, but it means instead of having shrill voices of discord, we need a chorus of harmony. In a chorus of harmony you know there are lots of differences, but you can hear all the voices. And that is important.

And we've got to challenge every American in every sector of our society to do their part. We have to challenge in a positive way and hold accountable people who claim to be not responsible for any consequences of their actions that they did not specifically intend -- whether it's in government, business, labor, entertainment, the media, religion or community organizations. None of us can say we're not accountable for our actions because we did not intend those consequences, even if we made some contribution to them.

Two day ago, on July the 4th, the people of Oklahoma City raised their flags and their spirits to full mast for the first time since the awful tragedy of April 19th. Governor Keating and Mayor Norick led a celebration in Oklahoma City, which some of you may have seen on television; a celebration of honor and thanks for thousands of Oklahomans and other Americans who showed up and stood united in the face of that awful hatred and loss for what is best in our country.

You know, Oklahoma City took a lot of the meanness out of America. It gave us a chance for more sober reflection. It gave us a chance to come to the same conclusion that Thomas Jefferson did in his first inaugural. I want to read this to you with only this bit of history: Thomas Jefferson was elected the first time by the House of Representatives in a bitterly-contested election in the first outbreak of completely excessive partisanship in American history. In that sense it was a time not unlike this time. And this is what he said: "Let us unite with our heart and mind. Let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and affection without which liberty and life itself are but dreary things."

We can redeem the promise of America for our children. We can certainly restore the American family for another full century if we commit to each other, as the founders did, our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor. In our hour of the greatest peril and the greatest division when we were fighting over the issue which we still have not fully resolved, Abraham Lincoln said, "We are not enemies but friends. We must not be enemies."

My friends, amidst all our differences, let us find a new, common ground. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END

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Child Care

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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PRESS BRIEFING BY
SECRETARY OF HHS DONNA SHALALA
AND DIRECTOR OF THE DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL BRUCE REED

The Briefing Room

4:10 P.M. EST

MR. TOIV: Hello again. Once again, making an encore appearance in the White House Briefing Room is Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, as well as Bruce Reed, the President's Domestic Policy Advisor.

MR. REED: In a moment Donna will try to put this whole child care issue in context. I thought I would go over the gritty details of the announcement and we can take questions at the end.

First let me say that we feel that this is a real opportunity for bipartisan accomplishment. Donna and I have both had conversations with a number of members of Congress in both parties and we've gotten a very good reception. There was a strong bipartisan turnout at the event this afternoon. And much of this package builds on a long history of bipartisan accomplishment. The child care development block grant which we're dramatically expanding was enacted in 1990 under the Bush administration with strong bipartisan leadership on the Hill from Chris Dodd and Orrin Hatch and then Governor Bill Clinton. And the expansion of the child care tax credit is also a program that has a long history of bipartisan support, supported by President Reagan, President Bush and President Clinton.

The centerpiece, as I said, of this announcement is a dramatic expansion of the child care development block grant, which states use to provide subsidies to low-income working parents, many of them who are moving from welfare to work. In last year's welfare reform bill, we got a \$4 billion increase in child care to move people from welfare to work. That is a big factor in welfare reform's success to this point. But in states across the country there are still waiting lists for many working parents -- low-income working parents -- who never went on welfare in the first place. And this initiative is designed to help states deal with both low-income as well as parents who are moving off of welfare.

The overall increase is \$7.5 billion over five years. That program is currently \$3 billion a year. It will get to \$5 billion by the fifth year. And this will enable us to increase the number of kids who are getting help from 1 million in the latest figures to 2 million by the out-years.

The second thing we're doing is expanding the child independent tax credit, which provides tax relief on a sliding scale to parents who have child care expenses. Our expansion of this tax credit will enable 3 million additional -- 3 million families to get

additional tax relief, an average tax cut of \$358. As the President said a few moments ago, it will enable a family of four with an income of \$35,000 and high child care costs to wipe out their entire federal tax liability. And that's true for most families under 200 percent of poverty who have high child care costs.

Q What do you call high child care costs.

MR. REED: Four thousand dollars a year for two kids.

Let me try to explain how this tax cut works. Under current law, you can get -- you can take 30 percent of allowable expenses as a credit against your taxes if you make \$10,000 or less, and 20 percent of those expenses if you make \$28,000 or more. If you're between \$10,000 and \$28,000 if there's a sliding scale, it reduces from 30 percent down to 20 percent.

What we are doing is to both increase the size of the percentage credit and to make it more available to more middle income parents. We will raise the maximum credit to 50 percent and allow anyone who makes \$30,000 or less to claim that 50 percent credit. And we will have a sliding scale that allows anyone who makes under \$60,000 to get an increased credit. Basically, it will go from 50 percent at \$30,000 sliding down to 20 percent at \$60,000.

Q Is that a couple or --

MR. REED: These are two-income families, working parents with --

Q And can you just repeat what it is now?

MR. REED: It's 30 percent if you make \$10,000 or less; 20 percent if you make \$28,000 or more. And that will go up to 50 percent for \$30,000 or less and it will reduce by one percentage point for every additional thousand you make, with a floor of 20 percent at \$60,000.

Q Is there a cap on that, and will you be changing the cap?

MR. REED: There's a cap on the allowable expenses. It's \$1,400 per child -- excuse me -- \$2,400 per child of allowable expenses -- \$2,400 for the first child, \$4,800 for two children and it's capped at \$4,800 -- if you have more than two children it's still capped. We're not changing that cap.

Q If you get more than \$60,000 you get zero credit or you only get minimum credit?

MR. REED: You continue to get 20 percent. There will be no change in the law. Right now, as I said, 20 percent credit if you're over \$28,000. That goes on under current law no matter what income. And that won't change.

Q And so if your total cost, no matter how many kids you have, it's 20 percent of your child care costs?

MR. REED: Yes, 20 percent of child care expenses --

Q Up to the \$4,800?

MR. REED: That \$4,800 is the maximum allowable expenses that you can claim the credit against. So if you're at \$30,000 and you had child care expenses of \$6,000, you could claim up to 50

percent of \$4,800.

Q And that cap is staying the same, you're saying, or it's not --

MR. REED: The cap is staying the same. We're dramatically increasing the percentage credit you can take.

Q One thing on the \$60,000 -- that's not a limit, so you can make a million dollars and still claim 20 percent?

MR. REED: Yes. Yes, that's current law.

Q Under the new proposal.

MR. REED: All we're doing is increasing the amount for families that -- increasing the percentage for families that are making under \$60,000. If you make more than \$60,000 you won't see any change as a result of this proposal.

Q Can you tell us what it is for singles? There are a lot of single people -- it's just half?

MR. TOIV: Head of household is taxed similarly to married couples --

SECRETARY SHALALA: It's income.

Q So when I asked you before if it was for double filers, a lot of the times --

MR. REED: While Donna is talking I'll pull out my briefing paper on --

MR. TOIV: I'll call Secretary Rubin.

SECRETARY SHALALA: Right.

MR. REED: Let me correct myself. I believe that the -- it's only for working parents, but it doesn't discriminate between single and two parents. So a single parent would still benefit from this proposal. Sorry about that.

Just to finish. We also have a new tax credit for businesses to claim up to 25 percent of the expenses for operating a child care facility, starting a new child care facility, providing child care subsidies to their employees. Then we're increasing the amount of subsidies for after-school programs to allow 500,000 kids a year to get after-school care. And we have a number of initiatives to address safety, quality and early learning, including a new \$3 billion early learning fund that goes to states that can use the money to reward innovative programs in particular communities that are reducing child-staff ratios and providing more training; and then a couple of initiatives that the President announced at the child care conference last fall background checks and scholarships for child care providers.

Q I just want to go back to the tax credits for a minute. You're increasing the current budget by \$5.2 billion, correct?

MR. REED: That's correct.

Q What is the current budget?

MR. REED: I think it currently costs about -- I think it's about \$3 billion a year -- \$2.5 billion a year in FY '98. So it's going from roughly \$2.5 billion to about \$3.5 billion.

Q And is there currently a business tax credit?

MR. REED: No.

Q This is totally new.

MR. REED: It's new. And it's based on a proposal that passed the Senate last year, sponsored by Senator Herbert Kohl of Wisconsin.

Q -- you said \$2.5 billion is the current, and then you said --

MR. REED: Sorry, \$2.5 billion per year --

Q To --

MR. REED: Is the annual current cost of the existing children's tax credit. And that would be increased to an annual cost of \$3.5 billion.

Q There's a tax deduction through payroll that a lot of people can take of up to like \$8,000 for their dependent care. Is that something totally separate from this, or -- can you explain how -- is that being changed by this proposal at all?

SECRETARY SHALALA: This is it.

Q It's the same credit, just in another form?

SECRETARY SHALALA: It's the same credit. It's called the Dependent Care Tax Credit. There's a difference between the children's -- there's a difference between what we did in a bipartisan way last year for just children and dependent care.

Dependent care means not only children; the tax credit that we're talking about changing, but also about elderly parents you can take a deduction for that. Though 90 percent of the people that use this tax credit use it for child care. And it was designed originally for both children as well as if you're taking care of elderly parents, for example. So you get some credit for that care.

And what Bruce just described is the way in which we're changing this to help more middle-income and lower-middle-income families as part of this overall initiative.

Q So is the net effect that that limit -- or that that credit that people currently get or can get as tax-free income in their paychecks to pay for dependent care is going up under this program as well?

SECRETARY SHALALA: It is going up for families who have incomes under \$60,000, which is the point that we've made. And let me just say a couple of more things and then we'll go to questions. And let me just say again what the President, the First Lady and the Gores said -- when we're talking to parents who are working, the one thing that always comes up is child care. And they're asking three questions: Can I get it? Can I afford it? And can I trust it? This proposal speaks to all three of those. This is a proposal that

focuses on the affordability issue, on the choice issue, to give people more choices out there. For many people, all they can afford is to find some relative to take care of their child. And so this by investing money in this program, we hope to give every parent more choices, whether it's institutional or family day care.

And the third point, which is terribly important, is the quality issue. This is the first major investment in child care quality, outside of the Head Start program, that we have ever made. It's an investment in the people that work in child care centers. It's an investment in their facilities, in the curriculum, in the standards that states have.

One of the things that Mrs. Clinton has made very clear -- and she said it again in her conference -- is if you're in the military in this country and you put your child in a military child care center, that center is visited at least three times unannounced by an experienced child care person who looks at the center and looks at the standards that they have for that center. If you're not in the military, you're a civilian, and you put your child in a child care center any place in this country, you'll be lucky if that child care center is visited by state officials once. And so this investment is also an investment significantly in the states to help them enforce their own rules about child care centers and to help them and local communities and parents to invest in improving the quality of the child care that we have out there. So it's not only about paying for child care, it's also about the quality for child care.

Why don't we -- I think that that's it. And again, to distinguish, as Bruce did, between what we did for welfare families and now what the President is doing for families that go directly to work and don't go through the welfare system.

Q On Head Start, this is increasing by \$3.8 billion? Another budget question.

SECRETARY SHALALA: The Head Start increase is \$3.4 billion over five --

MR. REED: It's \$3.8 billion -- you're right.

Q And what is it now?

SECRETARY SHALALA: Oh, my chart is wrong -- \$3.8 billion over five years.

MR. REED: Current Head Start spending is -- it was \$4.4 billion in FY'98.

Q How many children are deprived of Head Start, despite all the increases? Do you have any idea? And why isn't everyone covered?

SECRETARY SHALALA: Well, it's a question of everybody that's eligible. What the President has pledged to do by 2002 is to get a million people in Head Start. We believe that will take care of almost everyone who is eligible for Head Start. We are on that track with this budget investment and we have laid out a track that will get us to a million children.

In addition to that, the President is doubling the number of children in the new program called Early Head Start which is a zero to three initiative. One of the things that this child care initiative does is for the first time we're going out to try to

develop some models for infants. Parents are having a terrible time finding quality care for infants. And there are almost no centers in this country that will take infants. And this will help the states and community groups to develop some models. And in the Head Start program we're making an investment for infant care just as well.

Q How much of the total package is depending on income from a tobacco settlement? And if there is no tobacco settlement, are you committed to either tax increases or budget cuts in order to fund --

SECRETARY SHALALA: The answer to the first question is one-third. The answer to the second question is that we believe that there will be tobacco legislation next year -- this year, this year -- we're in the new year. We believe there will be tobacco legislation next year -- that's what the President is working for. There's bipartisan support for tobacco legislation and, therefore, we are enthusiastic and will work very hard to get that.

Q Just to follow on that, should somebody who is enthusiastic about these programs -- some parent out there -- should they be just crossing their fingers that tobacco passes, or can they be confident that regardless of what happens with tobacco, the administration is committed to having in the FY'99 budget?

SECRETARY SHALALA: Well, what we do when we put together a balanced budget and send it to the Hill is we pay for it in a variety of different ways. And while some of this package is paid for with tobacco legislation, some of the other parts of our budget are paid for with user charges, with savings from fraud, for example. Many of the things that pay for a budget require congressional approval, so what has happened always -- and we believe we're going to be very successful in getting tobacco legislation -- is we're committed to the policies and then we work with Congress to make sure that those policies get enacted and get funded.

Q Right, but this is an unprecedented tobacco settlement, however likely it may be at this point, would be an unprecedented act of Congress. And so are you just not clear yet what happens if it doesn't pass or do you have a strategy that you're not prepared to say yet?

SECRETARY SHALALA: No, I mean, it is unprecedented in the sense that we have never done tobacco legislation before. But we have vast experience in all administrations in putting budgets together that are financed by a variety of different sources, including user charges that require legislation. And that's what you do when you put the budget process together.

Q But there's no guarantee, is there?

SECRETARY SHALALA: There's no guarantee on other parts of the budget that require congressional legislation. What we do is we put a credible, fiscally responsible budget together. We believe we have bipartisan support for tobacco legislation and that we will get that legislation. This is not pie-in-the-sky. We are very far along, we believe, in consensus on getting tobacco legislation, though not on the specifics.

Q The question is what Raines has said is a tobacco settlement is self-contained, and that if you don't get the tobacco settlement, then the spending you were going to make with the tobacco settlement also goes away. So our question is, if there's no tobacco settlement, does this spending still take place?

SECRETARY SHALALA: Then we do what we always do as part of the budget process -- we get other offsets working with Congress to pay for the policies that we want to put in place. That is the normal process. And my only point about however this is paid for is there is a normal budget process no matter what the label is -- we find other offsets if we need to find other offsets.

Q So the President is committed --

SECRETARY SHALALA: The President is committed to both -- to this being passed by the Congress, to this child care -- historic child care legislation being passed by Congress and to getting good tobacco legislation this year.

Q You'll cut someplace else then if you don't get it -- and this will have the priority if you don't get the tobacco --

SECRETARY SHALALA: It's inappropriate to use the word cut. We will find other offsets if we need to, but at the moment --

Q Why is it such a bad word in this country?

SECRETARY SHALALA: Cut?

Q Why is it --

SECRETARY SHALALA: We do it all the time.

Q Right, so why can't --

SECRETARY SHALALA: Well, because I don't want to identify what the offsets are. The offsets and the savings in a budget and where we can find a variety of different resources, I don't want to limit myself to defining what the offset is. The point is that we will find other offsets if we need to. At this moment we believe we will get tobacco legislation.

Q For many years we've heard of fully funding Head Start, from the first time that the President has run for office. Are we there yet? Or where is it?

SECRETARY SHALALA: The President laid out a strategy for fully funding Head Start that ends in 2002. We are on that path. And what we have identified in this initiative fulfills the responsibility for next year. And we have laid out what the numbers are going to be until 2002 to get there.

Q -- is the number where we have fully funded Head Start. We are done. That is it. That's the road you've been on all this --

SECRETARY SHALALA: Well, assuming that incomes don't change and other kinds of things, but we're projected to have the Head Start program cover every child that's eligible.

Q Do you think linking the tobacco and the child care is going to increase pressure to have a tobacco legislation? Was this a political move also to use tobacco funding for something as popular such as child care?

MR. REED: I think that it is clear that there is considerable bipartisan support for child care. We think there is considerable bipartisan support for tobacco legislation. It makes perfect sense to link the two in some way. As the Secretary said, a third of this package is connected to tobacco legislation in our

budget. But we think that there will be real bipartisan interest in both of these initiatives.

Q Can I follow up? Do you risk painting opponents of a tobacco deal as anti-child care by linking these two, is that your intent?

SECRETARY SHALALA: What a good idea. (Laughter.) Hadn't thought about that. No, I think that -- I think that when we put this package together we put a responsible fiscal package with the appropriate offsets together. This happened to be one of them. And we've been very honest about answering what part of this total package we've assigned to that.

Q Can I clarify one thing on the spending? Is the \$20 billion, \$21 billion, is this all in addition to what was already budgeted for these programs?

SECRETARY SHALALA: Yes. The answer is yes. And that's why it's historic. That's why it's so significant.

Q The spending on child care is not envisioned by the tobacco settlement that I've seen. Is this going to add to the amount of money that is ultimately extracted from the tobacco companies? And if so, are you sort of setting a precedent that other individual programs are going to be able to sort of take from this settlement?

SECRETARY SHALALA: No, we have not -- we have not submitted a list. And we're at the beginnings of conversations with those who are drafting legislation for what we believe ought to be paid for by tobacco money. So we are now doing that as part of the budget process. You will see some of it there, but this will be part of a significant negotiation.

MR. REED: Could I add -- all I was going to say in addition to that is in the initial proposal on tobacco from the attorneys general in the states envisioned a significant portion of that money going into children's health. Shortly after that proposal came out we enacted the largest increase in health care in 30 years and addressed the children's health need that they had suggested. Child care is one of the top priorities of the National Governors Association and the governors in both parties, so we think this is a natural link.

SECRETARY SHALALA: If you listen very closely to what the President said about the relationship between child care and children's health, the public health issues that I'm concerned about are directly connected to what happens to children after school, for example. So these are not unconnected activities, and remember, most of this money goes to the states.

Q Can I follow on that for a second, because the Vice President talked at length about after-school initiatives and this is not a huge amount of money in here -- \$800 million for after school. And there were some advocates for after-school programs here who said it's not nearly enough. Can you address that?

SECRETARY SHALALA: I agree with that, it's not nearly enough. Nor is any of the other pieces nearly enough if you want to cover everything. But let me remind you that we're going from a \$40 million program to an \$800 million program in the Department of Education. There are monies -- pardon?

MR. REED: It's \$40 million to \$200 million.

SECRETARY SHALALA: It's \$40 million to \$200 million the first year. But the total amount over five years is \$800 million. So it is a significant increase. This is a new area for the federal government. The expansion of programs has been an activity particularly of large cities around the country. We believe it is a significant and a fair increase and we'll be talking to the Congress about it.

Q To clarify, on the example, the \$358 example in savings the President gave, what were you assuming were the child care costs to come up with that?

MR. REED: I think that is Treasury's estimate of what the existing base of taxpayers will receive as a tax cut as a result -- the \$358 is not based on a specific case, it's based on current average of current expenses from current taxpayers. And we can try to get for you what --

Q It might make it easier just when someone reads a story to say for someone who makes \$30,000, there's four kids, who spent \$3,000 on --

MR. REED: Oh, I have several examples if you'd like to see -- I can hand out a whole chart.

Q Where does the other two-thirds of the money come from? You said a third comes from the tobacco deal. Where does the other two-thirds come from?

SECRETARY SHALALA: Oh, there are offsets in the budget. As you know, when we put the budget together we have a variety of different offsets. I have made a major contribution because of the decline in Medicare expenditures to the overall budget. In fact two-thirds of all of the savings is a decline in the growth of Medicare. So you will see it when we lay out the budget that there are a variety of different offsets.

Q And if I could follow that up, what does it mean that a third of the money comes from the tobacco settlement if there's just a big pool of offsets and all the money is going in altogether? Who came up with a third and what's the reason for a third?

MR. REED: As Frank Raines explained the other day, in the budget we will present, revenue is expected from tobacco legislation and spending associated with that, and that's where the third comes from.

Q Well, to follow on that, is that money from the tobacco settlement earmarked for any specific part of this proposal, any of these individual items?

SECRETARY SHALALA: I think we're probably not prepared to answer that now, because the budget is being finalized. So why don't we give you that answer when we roll out the budget.

MR. REED: And in any event, as we've said before, once it gets to the Hill it's all fungible. They can move one piece --

Q On another subject -- this is for Secretary Shalala -- could give us your views, if you have any, on the scientist who wants to go forward with cloning experiments?

SECRETARY SHALALA: Well, we have said very clearly that

we believe that human experimentation is morally wrong and unacceptable and should not go forward. And as you know, the President has emphasized and submitted legislation to the Congress that would prohibit either public or private -- or the private sector using these techniques to create a child. So we have taken a very firm position. We have sent legislation to the Hill.

In addition, the FDA believes it has authority to regulate what would be called an emerging technology. It would regulate this technology, as it does others, with a view towards protecting the safety of patients and the public health, which means that the FDA has a rigorous process between now and when Congress debates the legislation that could be used in this particular case. No one could go forward without submitting a request to the FDA, is the point I'm making.

Q Knowing that you cannot tell the FDA what to do and all that, and I understand that; however, given that Congress has yet to outlaw cloning, is there then the possibility that if the doctor from Chicago submits all his paperwork and things seem to be in line, could then the cloning go forward until such time as Congress acts? Is it possible?

SECRETARY SHALALA: I would not predict what the FDA's response would be. All I could say is that they have a very rigorous process for protecting the public health and safety, and this would have to go through that process. And as you well know, there has been extensive complaints about the time that the FDA takes to approve various submissions. (Laughter.)

Q Bruce, two years ago at the State of the Union, the President said the era of big government is over, and yet \$20 billion is not an inconsequential sum. Does the improved budget picture mean that a new era is underway?

MR. REED: This is not a big government program. There are no new federal rules in this. This is not a Washington, one size fits all program. This is money that is going directly to individuals or through states to individuals to meet immediate needs. It's tax credits which go to individuals and block grants and other programs that go to states for subsidies to individuals. So we think that the President has demonstrated this week, by balancing the budget -- or by presenting a balanced budget for the first time in 30 years, that he meant what he said. But that doesn't mean that there aren't still important initiatives to get done in this country.

SECRETARY SHALALA: There are also no new bureaucracies that are created, no new major staff requirements that are required. We're taking existing programs and sending larger sums of money to the states and to individuals.

Q Secretary, what happens if someone doesn't file that paperwork or the people involved don't file the paperwork that you believe is necessary to go forward with the cloning program? What actions can the FDA or HHS take at that point?

SECRETARY SHALALA: I think that you should refer that question directly to the FDA rather than me. The FDA is an independent regulatory agency. While they send recommendations for regulation through me, those individual decisions about submissions are theirs, and I prefer that you call the press office of FDA, which is now headed by Lorrie McHugh, someone you know.

Q I have an after-school question. Is that money targeted toward cities or poor neighborhoods for the after-school

programs?

SECRETARY SHALALA: It's targeted to schools though some of it will be used for community organizations, boys and girls clubs and those kinds of organizations.

Q But will a rich suburb and a poor inner-city have the same shot at that money?

MR. REED: It's somewhat targeted, but not exclusively to poor neighborhoods.

SECRETARY SHALALA: We need to keep every child in America busy between when school is out and their parents get home.

Q Can you do the child care exclusively through the budget, or do you need separate legislation to do this?

SECRETARY SHALALA: We need legislation in the tax area, clearly, because there are some reforms that are introduced. In the child care block grant, we do not need legislation; we simply need the appropriate appropriation. In the area of quality, we will need some changes in existing legislation. So there are some changes. They're not overwhelming, though.

Q Have you begun to work with members of Congress on these --

SECRETARY SHALALA: We've begun our conversations with members of Congress today. Both Bruce Reed and I have talked to members of Congress, and we'll be meeting -- we've already talked to members of their staffs in terms of briefings, and we'll be meeting with them as soon as the President announces the whole budget.

MR. REED: And a number of members in both parties have already introduced legislation which is consistent with the President's plan.

Q Bruce, are you asking a sunset on the business tax proposal, or is this a certain number of years, or is it going to be permanent? And what is the most a company can receive in any year?

MR. REED: I believe the most -- businesses are allowed to claim 25 percent of qualified cost, which is a fairly expansive definition. They can't claim more than \$150,000 per year. And it's a five-year tax credit. You know, our budget only goes five years.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

SECRETARY SHALALA: Thank you.

END

4:42 P.M. EST

President Clinton Calls For Better Access To Quality Child Care

THE WHITE HOUSE Office of the Press Secretary (Westport, Connecticut)

For Immediate Release

March 10, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE BRIDGEPORT COMMUNITY

Housatonic Community Technical College
Bridgeport, Connecticut

11:30 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. First of all, I think Pamela did a terrific job with her speech. And secondly, when Anthony stood up, I thought to myself, in a few years Congressman Shays will be retiring and I -- (laughter) -- may be looking at his successor right there. He was great. (Applause.) I love it. Senator Dodd, you might want to hire him as a consultant this year. (Laughter.)

Mr. Mayor, I'm delighted to be back in Bridgeport with you and Jennifer and the officials of the city government. I thank Senator Dodd and Congressman Shays and Representatives Barbara Kennelly and Rose DeLauro for joining us today. Attorney General Blumenthal, Treasurer Paul Sylvester, Speaker Ritter and members of the legislature.

Like Senator Dodd, I want to extend my condolences on behalf of Hillary and myself to the families of the victims of the shooting incident in Newington and our prayers are with them.

And like Senator Dodd, on a happier note, I want to congratulate Connecticut for getting both its teams into the NCAA. (Laughter.) So did Arkansas. (Laughter.) Thank goodness we don't have a contest anytime soon, and what Senator Dodd didn't say is that UConn's men's team is actually playing in Washington this week. And so I think you all should keep score and see which members of your congressional delegation show up to root the home team on. (Laughter.)

I'm glad to be back in Bridgeport. I really like this community and I have admired the courage with which the people here have struggled in the tough years and moved to move the community forward. I should tell you -- whenever I come to a place you all notice that there are a few members of the press who come with me. (Laughter.) And sometimes it seems that we're on opposite sides of the line, but you should know that one member of the press, Larry McQuillan, who works for Reuters News Service, and is actually the President of the White House Press Corps this year, is from Bridgeport. He will write a totally biased, favorable story -- (laughter) -- about this wonderful college and child care program today, I can assure you. (Applause.)

I want to thank President Wurtz for showing me around the school and the unbelievable art

collection here, which you should be very proud of. And I want to thank Marie Nulty for taking me through the wonderful pre-school program.

In the Early Childhood Lab Schools Parent Handbook there is the following quote: "A child is like a butterfly in the wind. Some can fly higher than others, but each one flies the best it can. Each one is special. Each one is different. Each one is beautiful." After going through this child care center, it seems to me that that is a motto that every teacher I saw lived and worked by, and that every child I met was made to feel special every day.

The reason I came here today is twofold: First of all, because of the extraordinary leadership for children and especially on the child care center issue -- child care issue, Senator Dodd, along with the members of your House delegation who are here, who have been terrific on this issue. And second, because what I see here today is what I believe every child in America needs, and it's important that we graphically demonstrate to the country that with so many parents in the work force are going back to school, there is a crying unmet need which the Mayor graphically and numerically demonstrated in his remarks just here in Bridgeport, all over the country for the kind of high-quality child that you offer here.

Today we have to make a commitment to extend that option to every family in America that needs it. I want to talk about what we in the federal government can do on our own to improve child care at federal centers, but most importantly, I want to talk about what Congress should do in the next 70 days to help every working family give their children the kind of child care we see here.

As has been said already, these are good times for America. We have 15 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, the highest home ownership rate in history, the lowest welfare rolls in 27 years, the lowest crime rate in 24 years. And I'm proud of it. (Applause.) These numbers only matter insofar as they reflect differences in the lives of ordinary Americans -- a different life story that can be told. The reason I was proud to be introduced by Pamela Price is that she embodies the changing story of America over the last five years, and that's what we want for every American who's willing to work for it.

In last year's historic balanced budget agreement we provided a child care tax credit of \$500 per child for families; expanded health care coverage to 5 million more children in lower income working families who don't have access to it now; and perhaps most important, have virtually opened the doors of college to all Americans. For example -- and you can compare it, what it means here at Housatonic -- in the last years we have added 300,000 work-study slots, hundreds of thousands of more scholarships; we've made the interest on student loans tax deductible; 100,000 young people have worked their way through college or earned money for college by serving in AmeriCorps in community service projects. You can now save for a college education in an IRA and withdraw from the IRA tax free if the money is used for a college education.

But most important, now there is a \$1,500 tax credit -- that's not a deduction, a credit -- a reduction of your tax bill for the first two years of college; and a lifetime learning credit that is substantial, but not quite that large for junior and senior years, for job training programs, for graduate schools. I think we can really say that insofar as community-based institutions like this are concerned, we have opened the doors of college to all Americans who are willing to work for it. And that is a profoundly important achievement for our country.

Senator Dodd talked about what the Family and Medical Leave Act means. The American Dream is now in reach for more and more families. And that is a very, very good thing. But as you heard Pamela say, what made all this work for her as she was struggling to put her life on track was knowing that her child would be in a safe, healthy, positive child care environment. And if we really want to open the doors of opportunity to all Americans, we not only have to finish our agenda of bringing job opportunities and business

opportunities into every neighborhood and every city like Bridgeport in America, we have to make sure that if the jobs and the educational opportunities are open the parents can actually go without having to worry that they're neglecting their children.

We can never have a country that is fully successful if millions of people every day get up and look forward to a day in which they are terrified that they will have to make a choice between being a responsible parent and a good worker or a good student. If we have to choose, we lose. Society has no more important work than raising children. If everyone did that successfully, I think we would all agree we'd have less than half the problems we have today.

On the other hand, this economic boom we celebrate was fueled by having nearly two-thirds of the American adults in the work force; the highest percentage of people in the workforce in history. That's how you get a low unemployment rate. Well, by definition, a lot of those folks are parents with children who have to be supervised, and nourished, and supported and helped.

So when you think about this child care issue, if you look at the way I do, not just as President, but as a parent and as someone who's worked all his life, I say to myself, we cannot have a country that asks people to make a choice between succeeding at home and succeeding at work, and insofar as we have to choose, we lose. When we know we can succeed at home and at work because of an effective child care center, every American wins. The country wins. We're stronger in the 21st century. Our families are stronger, our economies are stronger, they reinforce each other. That's really what this child care issue is all about.

Now, we've worked hard on this for the last five years. We've helped a million more parents to pay -- or the parents of a million more children to pay for child care. But obviously -- remember the Mayor's numbers for Bridgeport -- there is a huge amount of work to be done here. And today, we're releasing a report that confirms the overwhelming need still existing all across America. The report shows that states have come up with a lot of innovative ideas, and the Congress allocated \$4 billion more to states for child care as a part of welfare reform. But even with all that, it is clear that the resources are simply not there yet to meet the needs of all the families in America. States have been forced to turn away literally thousands upon thousands of low income families.

In Connecticut, the State Child Care Bureau has to restrict its aid to families on welfare or teen parents in high school. They've actually stopped taking applications from families that are so-called "working poor" altogether.

So here we are at a time of unprecedented prosperity, when people at the lower end of the income scale are finally beginning to get pay rises and have some security in their jobs, but we know they can't afford quality child care without help. So here we are at a time, the best of times for our country, and yet we still have millions of people getting up every day, going to work worrying about their children. We are forcing them to make choices that no family should have to make, that no country should tolerate, and that we will pay for down the road sooner or later. So what we want to do is pay for it now, the right way and have a good, positive environment. (Applause.)

Now, let me say some of the things that I intend to do with the federal child care centers. We care, the federal government cares in its child care centers for some 215,000 children. That's quite a few. We want them to be a model for the nation.

Today, I'm going to direct my Cabinet to do four things. First, to make all the centers fully accredited by the year 2000. (Applause.) Now, what does that mean, in terms of quality of facilities, training for workers and child-to-staff ratios? Today, believe it or not, 76 percent of our military child care centers are already accredited, but only 35 percent of our

non-military centers are. We'll make both categories 100percent in the next 700 days.

Second, we have to make sure that all the centersconduct thorough background checks on workers. In too manystates there is no checking to see if the people we trust withour children are even trustworthy in the eyes of the law.Connecticut is one of the few states that actually does require acriminal background check of child care workers. Every stateshould do it and the federal government should certainly do it.

Third, we have to make sure that all federal workersknow about all their child care benefits and options in the firstplace. And, finally, we're going to do more work with theprivate sector to make federal child care better and moreaffordable.

If we do all that, there will still be millions ofkids out there and their parents who need help. In the balancedbudget I have presented to Congress for this year, I've proposeda comprehensive and responsible plan to strengthen child care. There will be other proposals to do the same thing.

Now, Congress is only going to meet about 70 moredays this year. I know you say, well, it's only March, but anywaythat's -- in Washington, Congress plans to only sit about 70 moredays. Now, there is enormous support, I believe, among people inboth parties in our country and I believe among people in bothparties in the Congress for taking action on child care. I havea plan and there are others which would double the number ofchildren receiving child care subsidies, at a million or more newkids, give tax cuts to businesses which provide child care,expand child care tax credits to 3 million working families, andimprove the standards of child care centers and provide morefunds to train -- adequately train -- workers in child carecenters. (Applause.)

We're not talking about peanuts here. Let me tellyou what we're talking about. The tax credits that we willoffer, if Congress would pass them, would mean that a family offour living on up to \$35,000 a year that has high child carebills would not pay any federal income tax. That would be aterrific incentive to help working families afford quality childcare. And for lower income working families who don't owe anyfederal income tax anyway, if we increase the block grant goingto the states, it goes to subsidized care for lower incomeworking families; plus the money that we have given the statesfor people moving from welfare to work -- we will be able to makea huge dent in this problem.

If Congress acts, we can make child care safer aswell as more affordable. We can even give scholarships under ourplan to talented care-givers to train more people. We also canexpand after school programs to keep 500,000 more kids, when theyget a little older, off our streets and out of trouble afterschool. I think that's very important. (Applause.)

As I said, there are only 70 days left. There arealways with something this big some controversy around the edgesof the issue. But all these things can be resolved if theCongress will make up its mind to act. Because these 70 days ofmeetings where they can vote will be spread over most of theyear. There's still time for committee meetings, for staff to dotheir work, for all that kind of stuff to happen. We can dothis. We do not need to wait another year just because this isan election year to pass this. We need to do this now.(Applause.)

The other thing I want to say that's related to thisis that Congress must pass comprehensive tobacco legislation toreduce teen smoking and raise the price of cigarettes by up to\$1.50 a pack -- (applause) -- impose strong penalties oncompanies that continue to advertise to children, and give theFDA full authority to regulate tobacco products and children'saccess to them. The revenues we raise from the tobacco companywould help to make a partial contribution to the child care planthat I have proposed as well. (Applause.)

Again I say, there's some controversy, there's someissues that have to be resolved in this tobacco settlement, toget the legislation. But I want to, again, graphicallyillustrate -- I just

watched all those little kids in that room, those two rooms, these beautiful children -- every single day, even though it is illegal in every state in America, 3,000 more children begin to smoke; 1,000 of those 3,000 children will die sooner because of that decision. Hardly anybody becomes a chronic, lifetime smoker who does not start in their teenage years.

So I know there are only 70 days left and I know this is a big bill. But I know that there are Democrats and Republicans in substantial numbers who want to do this. We should not let the calendar get in the way of the urgent need for action. We can pass the child care reforms and we can fund them. And we can pass the tobacco legislation and we must. Just think about it: 1,000 kids every day that want -- just like all these children did in here. Just think about it, every single day. There is no need to wait. There is no excuse for waiting. The time to act is now. (Applause.)

I leave you with this thought. I'm glad you clapped when I said these are good times for America. And you ought to be proud of yourselves, because the whole country helped to create these good times. And the efforts that we make in different areas -- from the economy to crime to welfare reform to early childhood to health and education -- they all reinforce each other. But sometimes when times are good and people clap and they feel good, they relax. I tell you, when times are good, but challenges are large and the future is coming at you like a fast train down a track -- and that's how the 21st century is coming at you, with things changing more rapidly than ever before -- then an obligation is imposed to use the good times to act, not to relax.

So I say to all of you, the members of Congress who are here are ready to act, so give them all a pat on the back, but do everything you can to send a clear and unambiguous signal that you do not want the election year to be a relaxation year, you want it to be a legislating year for the children of this country to make them stronger in the new century. After all, it's only 700 days away. Let's spend 70 days to make sure that in 700 days we'll have the healthiest, strongest children in the history of our nation.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

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FMLA —

Family-Friendly
Work Arrangements

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 5, 1993

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT BILL SIGNING CEREMONY

The Rose Garden

9:22 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Mrs. Yandle, I never had a better introduction. Before we thank anyone else, I think all of us should acknowledge that it was America's families who have beaten the gridlock in Washington to pass family leave -- people like this fine woman all over America who talked to members of Congress, both Democrat and Republican, who laid their plight out, who asked that their voices be heard.

When Senator Gore and I ran in the election last year, we published a book called Putting People First. I'm very proud that the first bill I am to sign as President truly puts people first. (Applause.)

I do want to thank the United States Congress for moving expeditiously on this matter and for doing it before their first recess, so that every member of Congress who voted for this bill can go home and say, we are up there working on your problems and your promise, trying to make a better future for you.

This sends a clearer signal than any words any of us could utter, that we have tried to give this government back to the American people. And I am very appreciative that the Congress has moved so rapidly on this bill.

There are many, many members of Congress here and many others who are not here who played a major role in this legislation. Time does not permit me to mention them all, but I do want to thank the Senate Majority Leader for his heroic efforts in the 11th hour to make sure we pass this bill; Senator Kennedy and Senator Dodd for their passionate and years-long commitment to this effort. (Applause.)

I want to thank the Speaker, Speaker Foley and Congressman Ford, the Chairman of the committee that had jurisdiction over this bill; and Congresswoman Pat Schroeder and all the other Democrats who worked on this bill. (Applause.) But I want to acknowledge, too, consistent with the promise I made in my inaugural -- to reach out to members of both parties who would try to push for progress -- that this bill also had passionate support among Republicans. My old colleague in the Governors Association, Senator Kit Bond from Missouri: I thank you for your leadership. (Applause.) Senator Jeffords and Senator Coats I don't believe are here, but they supported this bill strongly. And Congresswoman Marge Roukema from New Jersey -- (applause) -- her commitment on this was unwavering. Congresswoman Susan Molinari from New York and many other Republicans voted for us, spoke for and worked for this bill. I thank them, the subcommittee chairs who are here and all the other who worked so hard to make this bill a real live promise kept from

the Congress to the people of the United States.

Family medical leave has always had the support of a majority of Americans, from every part of the country, from every walk of life, from both political parties. But some people opposed it. And they were powerful, and it took eight years and two vetoes to make this legislation the law of the land. Now millions of our people will no longer have to chose between their jobs and their families.

The law guarantees the right of up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year when it's urgently needed at home to care for a newborn child, or an ill family member. This bill will strengthen our families and I believe it will strengthen our businesses and our economy as well. (Applause.)

I have spent an enormous amount of time in the last 12 years in the factories and businesses of this country talking to employers and employees; watching the way people work often working with them. And I know that men and women are more productive when they are sure they won't lose their jobs because they're trying to be good parents, good children. Our businesses should not lose the services of these dedicated Americans. And over the long run, the lessons of the most productive companies in the world, here at home and around the world, are that those that put their people first are those who will triumph in the global economy.

The business leaders who have already instituted family and medical leave understand this and I'm very proud of some of the business leaders who are here today who represent not only themselves but others all across America who were ahead of all of up who make laws in doing what is right by our families.

Family and medical leave is a matter of pure common sense and a matter of common decency. It will provide Americans what they need most -- peace of mind. Never again will parents have to fear losing their jobs because of their families.

Just a week ago, I spoke to 10 people in families who had experienced the kinds of problems Mrs. Yandle has talked about today. Vice President Gore and I talked a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 4, 1993, as National Women and Girls in Sports Day. I urge all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventeenth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 11, 1994

July 11, 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND
AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Expanding Family-Friendly Work
Arrangements in the Executive Branch

In order to recruit and retain a Federal work force that will provide the highest quality of service to the American people, the executive branch must implement flexible work arrangements to create a "family-friendly" workplace. Broad use of flexible work arrangements to enable Federal employees to better balance their work and family responsibilities can increase employee effectiveness and job satisfaction, while decreasing turnover rates and absenteeism. I therefore adopt the National Performance Review's recommendation that a more family-friendly workplace be created by expanding opportunities for Federal workers to participate in flexible work arrangements, consistent with the mission of the executive branch to serve the public.

The head of each executive department or agency (hereafter collectively "agency" or "agencies") is hereby directed to establish a program to encourage and support the expansion of flexible family-friendly work arrangements, including: job sharing; career part-time employment; alternative work schedules; telecommuting and satellite work locations. Such a program shall include:

- (1) identifying agency positions that are suitable for flexible work arrangements;
- (2) adopting appropriate policies to increase the opportunities for employees in suitable positions to participate in such flexible work arrangements;
- (3) providing appropriate training and support necessary to implement flexible work arrangements; and
- (4) identifying barriers to implementing this directive and providing recommendations for addressing such barriers to the President's Management Council.

I direct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management ("OPM") and the Administrator of General Services ("GSA") to take all necessary steps to support and encourage the expanded implementation of flexible work arrangements. The OPM and GSA shall work in concert to promptly review and revise regulations that are barriers to such work arrangements and develop legislative proposals, as needed, to achieve the goals of this directive. The OPM and GSA also shall assist agencies, as requested, to implement this directive.

The President's Management Council, in conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget, shall ensure that any guidance necessary to implement the actions set forth in this directive is provided. Independent agencies are requested to adhere to this directive to the extent permitted by law.

This directive is for the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget is authorized and directed to publish this directive in the Federal Register.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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National Service

Public Papers of the Presidents, March 1, 1993

Public Papers of the Presidents

March 1, 1993

CITE: 29 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 340

LENGTH: 4580 words

HEADLINE: Remarks on **National Service** at Rutgers University in New Brunswick

BODY:

Thank you, Nakia Tomlinson, for that fine introduction. I wish I could take you with me everywhere. We'd make a great duo there. Let's give her another hand. I thought she was great.
[Applause]

I'd like to thank President Frank Lawrence -- Francis Lawrence -- for his fine speech. Does anybody call him Frank? I should have asked. [Laughter] I want to compliment Professor Benjamin Barber for his leadership and service here. And I want to thank all of you here in the Rutgers community for coming out for what I hope will be a truly historic moment in our Nation's history.

In addition to the people who have been introduced here, there are a host of mayors and members of the assembly and county officials here from your State. We have two former Governors, both of whom I served with, Brendan Byrne and Tom Kean, who are out there. I'm glad to see them, my friends. We have a distinguished array of Members of the House from New Jersey, Herb Klein, Bob Menendez, Frank Pallone, Donald Payne.

But you have some Members of the Congress from all over America here, and I want to introduce them, too, because they have taken a lot of trouble to come to Rutgers and because without them and without the people who represent you, the proposal I make today has no hope of passage. Many Members of the Congress for years have believed we ought to do more in **national service**, and some of them are here today.

I'd like to begin by introducing your Senator, Bill Bradley, who's behind me. I must say, when I walked into this arena, I turned around and asked Bill Bradley if he'd ever shot any baskets in here. I'd be intimidated to be the opposing team in here. Senator Bradley sponsored legislation to establish neighborhood corps and and self-reliance scholarships, things that are forebears of the proposal I came to make.

I'd like to recognize the presence on the platform of Senator Ted Kennedy from Massachusetts who chairs the Senate Committee on Human Resources and Education, which shepherded the pilot national and community service bill through the Congress in the last session, along with his counterpart who is out here in the audience somewhere. I'd like to ask him to stand up, the chairman of the House committee, Congressman Bill Ford, who came all the way from Michigan to be with us. Congressman, would you stand up.

I'd like to recognize in the audience the presence of Senator Chris Dodd from Connecticut, who was one of the first Peace Corps volunteers in the United States.

The Member of Congress who introduced many, many years ago the first piece of **national service** legislation ever introduced, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee,, Senator Claiborne Pell from Rhode Island is here.

I'd also like to introduce the only person in this audience, at least of our crowd, who doesn't have to look up to Senator Bradley, Senator Jay Rockefeller from West Virginia, an early VISTA volunteer in the United States.

And finally, I would like to recognize two other people, one a Member of the United States Senate and one a distinguished American citizen, the first boss of the Peace Corps, Sargent Shriver, who's up here with me, and his deputy, Senator Harris Wofford, from Pennsylvania, and Mrs. Wofford, I'm glad to see you.

Now, I was involved before I became President in a group called the Democratic Leadership Council, and we made one of the central parts of our platform to reclaim a new majority of Americans for our party the establishment of a system of **national service** to help people to finance education. And one of our founding members and guiding lights is here, Representative Dave McCurdy from Oklahoma. I'd like for him to stand up.

Let me make this last point, if I might, by way of beginning. None of these things happen at the national level. We empower them to happen, and then people have to do things here at the grassroots. And I want to say a special word of thanks to your Governor for supporting the New Jersey Youth Corps and several other projects like it around the State, because if nobody's here to believe in this, it can't happen. And I thank Governor Florio for his support for these things.

I came here to ask all of you to join me in a great national adventure, for in the next few weeks I will ask the United States Congress to join me in creating a new system of voluntary **national service**, something that I believe in the next few years will change America forever and for the better.

My parents' generation won new dignity working their way out of the Great Depression through programs that provided them the opportunity to serve and to survive. Brave men and women in my own generation waged and won peaceful revolutions here at home for civil rights and human rights and began service around the world in the Peace Corps and here at home in VISTA.

Now, Americans of every generation face profound challenges in meeting the needs that have been neglected for too long in this country, from city streets plagued by crime and drugs, to classrooms where girls and boys must learn the skills they need for tomorrow, to hospital wards where patients need more care. All across America we have problems that demand our common attention.

For those who answer the call and meet these challenges, I propose that our country honor your service with new opportunities for education. **National service** will be America at its best, building community, offering opportunity, and rewarding responsibility. **National service** is a challenge for Americans from every background and walk of life, and it values something far more than money. **National service** is nothing less than the American way to change America.

It is rooted in the concept of community: the simple idea that none of us on our own will ever have as much to cherish about our own lives if we are out here all alone as we will if we work together; that somehow a society really is an organism in which the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts, and every one of us, no matter how many privileges with which we are born, can still be enriched by the contributions of the least of us; and that we will never fulfill our individual capacities until, as Americans, we can all be what God meant for us to be.

If that is so, if that is true, my fellow Americans, and if you believe it, it must therefore follow that each of us has an obligation to serve. For it is perfectly clear that all of us cannot be what we ought to be until those of us who can help others, and that is nearly all of us, are doing something to help others live up to their potential.

The concept of community and the idea of service are as old as our history. They began the moment America was literally invented. Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, "With a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortune, and our sacred honor."

In the midst of the Civil War, President Lincoln signed into law two visionary programs that helped our people come together again and build America up. The Morrill Act helped States create new land grant colleges. This is a land grant university. The university in my home State was the first land grant college west of the Mississippi River. In these places, young people learn to make American agriculture and industry the best in the world. The legacy of the Morrill Act is not only our great colleges and universities like Rutgers but the American tradition that merit and not money should give people a chance for a higher education.

Mr. Lincoln also signed the Homestead Act that offered 100 acres of land for families who had the courage to settle the frontier and farm the wilderness. Its legacy is a nation that stretches from coast to coast. Now we must create a new legacy that gives a new generation of Americans the right and the power to explore the frontiers of science and technology and space. The frontiers of the limitations of our knowledge must be pushed back so that we can do what we need to do. And education is the way to do it, just as surely as it was more than 100 years ago.

Seven decades after the Civil War, in the midst of the Great Depression, President Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps, which gave 2 1/2 million young people the opportunity to support themselves while working in disaster relief and maintaining forests, beaches, rivers, and parks. Its legacy is not only the restoration of our natural environment but the restoration of our national spirit. Along with the Works Products Administration, the WPA, the Civilian Conservation Corps symbolized Government's effort to provide a nation in depression with the opportunity to work, to build the American community through service. And all over America today you can see projects, even today in the 1990's, built by your parents or your grandparents with the WPA plaque on it, the CCC plaque on it, the idea that people should be asked to serve and rewarded for doing it.

In the midst of World War II, President Roosevelt proposed the GI bill of rights, which offered returning veterans the opportunity for education in respect to their service to our country in the war. Thanks to the GI bill, which became a living reality in President Truman's time, more than 8 million veterans got advanced education. And half a century later, the enduring legacy of the GI bill is the strongest economy in the world and the broadest, biggest middle class that any nation has ever enjoyed.

For many in my own generation, the summons to citizenship and service came on this day 32 years ago, when President Kennedy created the Peace Corps. With Sargent Shriver and Harris Wofford and other dedicated Americans, he enabled thousands of young men and women to serve on the leading edge of the new frontier, helping people all over the world to become what they ought to be, and bringing them the message by their very lives that America was a great country that stood for good values and human progress. At its height, the Peace Corps enrolled 16,000 young men and women. Its legacy is not simply good will and good works in countries all across the globe but a profound and lasting change in the way Americans think about their own country and the world.

Shortly after the Peace Corps, Congress, under President Johnson, created the Volunteers In Service To America. Senator Jay Rockefeller, whom I introduced a moment ago, and many thousands of other Americans went to the hills and hollows of poor places, like West Virginia and Arkansas and Mississippi, to lift up Americans through their service.

The lesson of our whole history is that honoring service and rewarding responsibility is the best investment America can make. And I have seen it today. Across this great land, through the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, which took the children who lived in the neighborhoods where the riots occurred and gave them a chance to get out into nature and to clean up their own neighborhoods and to lift themselves and their friends in the effort; in Boston with the City Year program; with all these programs represented here in this room today, the spirit of service is sweeping this country and giving us a chance to put the quilt of America together in a way that makes a strength out of diversity, that lifts us up out of our problems, and that keeps our people looking toward a better and brighter future.

National service recognizes a simple but powerful truth, that we make progress not by governmental action alone, but we do best when the people and their Government work at the grassroots in genuine partnership. The idea of **national service** permeates many other aspects of the programs I have sought to bring to America. The economic plan that I announced to Congress, for example, will offer every child the chance for a healthy start through immunization and basic health care and a head start. But still it depends on parents doing the best they can as parents and children making the most of their opportunities.

The plan can help to rebuild our cities and our small communities through physical investments that will put people to work. But Americans still must work to restore the social fabric that has been torn in too many communities. Unless people know we can work together in our schools, in our offices, in our factories, unless they believe we can walk the streets safely together, and unless we do that together, governmental action alone is doomed to fail.

The **national service** plan I propose will be built on the same principles as the old GI bill. When people give something of invaluable merit to their country, they ought to be rewarded with the opportunity to further their education. **National service** will challenge our people to do the work that should and indeed must be done and cannot be done unless the American people voluntarily give themselves up to that work. It will invest in the future of every person who serves.

As we rekindle the spirit of **national service**, I know it won't disappoint many of the students here to know that we also have to reform the whole system of student loans. We should begin by making it easier for young people to pay back their student loans and enabling them to hold jobs that may accomplish much but pay little.

Today, when students borrow money for an education, the repayment plan they make is based largely on how much they have to repay, without regard to what the jobs they take themselves pay. It is a powerful incentive, therefore, for young college graduates to do just the reverse of what we might want them to do, to take a job that pays more even if it is less rewarding because that is the job that will make the repayment of the loans possible. It is also, unfortunately, a powerful incentive for some not to make the payments at all, which is unforgivable.

So what we seek to do is to enable the American students to borrow the money they need for college and pay it back as a small percentage of their own income over time. This is especially important after a decade in which the cost of a college education has gone up even more rapidly than the cost of health care, making a major contribution to one of the more disturbing statistics in American today, which is that the college dropout rate in this country is now 2 1/2 times the high school dropout rate. We can do better than that through **national service** and adequate financing.

The present system is unacceptable, not only for students but for the taxpayers as well. It's complicated, and it's expensive. It costs the taxpayers of our country about \$ 4 billion every year to finance the student loan program because of loan defaults and the cost of administering the program. And I believe we can do better.

Beyond reforming this system for financing higher education, the **national service** program more importantly will create new opportunities for Americans to work off outstanding loans or to build up credits for future education and training opportunities.

We'll ask young people all across this country, and some who aren't so young who want to further their college education, to serve in our schools as teachers or tutors in reading and mathematics. We'll ask you to help our police forces across the Nation, training members for a new police corps that will walk beats and work with neighborhoods and build the kind of community ties that will prevent crime from happening in the first place so that our police officers won't have to spend all their time chasing criminals.

We'll ask young people to work, to help control pollution and recycle waste, to paint darkened buildings and clean up neighborhoods, to work with senior citizens and combat homelessness and help children in trouble get out of it and build a better life.

And these are just a few of the things that you will be able to do, for most of the decisions about what you can do will be made by people like those in this room, people who run the programs represented by all of those wearing these different kinds of tee-shirts. We don't seek a national bureaucracy. I have spoken often about how we need to reinvent the Government to make it more efficient and less bureaucratic, to make it more responsive to people at the grassroots level, and I want **national service** to do just that. I want it to empower young people and their communities, not to empower yet another Government bureaucracy in Washington. This is going to be your programs at your levels with your people.

And as you well know, that's what's happening all across America today. People are already serving their neighbors in their neighborhoods. Just this morning, I was inspired to see and to speak with students from Rutgers serving their community, from mentoring young people as Big Sisters to helping older people learn new skills. I met a lady today who has 13 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren who dropped out of school the year before I was born, who's about to become a high school graduate shortly because of the efforts of this program. You back there? Stand up.

I'm impressed by the spirit behind the Rutgers Civic Education and Community Service Program, the understanding that community service enriches education, that students should not only take the lessons they learn in class out into the community but bring the lessons they learn in the community back into the classroom. In that spirit, during this academic year alone, more than 800 students from Rutgers are contributing more than 60,000 hours of community service in New Brunswick, in Camden, in Newark, throughout this State.

This morning I also met with members of the New Jersey Youth Corps -- here they are; see them? Stand up -- young people who are looking for a second chance at school and who, when coming back to finish their high school degrees, also serve in their communities. Through this program, more than 6,500 young adults have contributed over 900,000 hours of service to the State of New Jersey. They've done everything from paint senior citizens' homes to tutor and mentor children in after-school programs. For the future of our State and Nation, we need more young people like those in the New Jersey Youth Corps who exemplify the spirit of service.

That spirit also moves people all across the Nation. In my State, there's a young woman named Antoinette Jackson, who's a senior in a small community called Gould, Arkansas. She's a member of the Delta Service Corps. The rural Mississippi Delta is still the poorest place in America. And in that area, she works with a "lend-a-hand" program which runs a thrift shop to provide hungry and homeless people with food and clothing. And in return, the Delta Corps is going to help her attend college so that she can make an even greater contribution.

The spirit of service also moves a young man I met about a year ago named Stephen Spalos, who works with the City Year program in Boston. At age 23, he's had some hard times in his life. But as he puts it, City Year gave him a place and the tools to be able to start over. He works as a team leader, a mentor, a tutor, a project manager for a bunch of young people who restore senior citizens' homes. Last year when I visited his project, he literally took his sweatshirt off his back and gave it to me so that I would never forget the kids at City Year. And I still wear it when I go jogging, always remembering what they're doing in Boston to help those kids.

The spirit of service moves Orah Fireman, a graduate of Wesleyan College. As a sophomore in high school, she worked with disadvantaged children in upstate New York. That experience changed her life. And during her high school and college years, she continued to work with children. And now that she is out of college, she has begun what will probably be a lifetime of service by working at a school for emotionally disturbed children in Boston. She wants other people to have the opportunity to serve, and she wrote this: "Service work teaches responsibility and compassion. It fights alienation by proving to young people that they can make a difference. There is no lesson

more important than that."

Well, there are stories like this in this room and all across America. And we're going to create thousands of more of them through **national service**. We'll work with groups with proven track records to serve their community, giving them the support they need. And if you have more good ideas, if you're entrepreneurs of **national service**, we'll let you compete for our form of venture capital, to develop new programs to serve your neighbors. That's how we want the **national service** program to grow every year, rewarding results, building on success, and bubbling up from the grassroots energy and compassion and intellect of America.

I don't want service to wait while this potential is wasted. That's why I want to make this summer a summer of service when young people can not only serve their communities but build a foundation for a new national effort. I've asked Congress to invest in and I'm asking young people to participate in a special effort in **national service** and leadership training just this summer. We are going to recruit about 1,000 young people from every background, from high school dropouts to college graduates, to send to an intensive leadership training program for **national service** at the beginning of the summer.

Then we'll ask them to work on one of our country's most urgent problems, helping our children who are in danger of losing their God-given potential. Some of them will tutor. Some will work on programs to immunize young children from preventable childhood diseases. Some will help to develop and run recreational centers or reclaim urban parks from dealers and debris. Some will counsel people a few years younger than themselves to help keep them out of gangs and into good activities. And everyone will learn about serving our country and helping our communities.

At the end of the summer, we'll bring all these people together for several days of debriefing and training, and then they'll all join in a youth service summit. I will attend the meeting, and I expect to listen a lot more than I talk. I'll ask leaders from Congress, from business, labor, religious, and community groups to attend the youth service summit too. We'll give those who serve the honor they deserve, and we'll learn a lot more about how to build this **national service** program. And from the thousand pioneers of this summer, I want the **national service** to grow 100-fold in the next 4 years.

But even when hundreds of thousands are serving, I want to maintain the pioneer spirit of this first few months, because **national service** can make America new again. It can help solve our problems, educate our people, and build our communities back together. So if anybody here would like to be one of those 1,000 or if anybody who is listening to this speech by radio or television or reads about it would like to be one of those 1,000, drop me a card at the White House and just mark it "**national service**." We're going to pick them, and I can't promise you'll be selected, but I promise you'll be considered. I want to engage the energies of America in this effort.

I also want to say that you shouldn't wait for the summer or for a new program. We need to begin now. We are going to be looking for the kinds of ideas that we ought to be funding. This is Monday. I ask you be Friday, every one of you, to think about what you think you can do and what we should do to be agents of renewal; to talk with your parents, your clergy, your friends, your teachers; to join the effort to renew our community and to rebuild our country; and to write to me about what you are doing. It's time for millions of us to change our country block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood; time to return to our roots an excitement, an idealism, and an energy.

I have to tell you that there are some among us who do not believe that young Americans will answer a call to action, who believe that our people now measure their success merely in the accumulation of material things. They believe this call to service will go unanswered. But I believe they are dead wrong.

And so, especially to the young Americans here, I ask you to prove that those who doubt you are wrong about your generation. And today I ask all of you who are young in spirit, whether you are a

10-year-old in a service program in our schools who reads to still younger children or a 72-year-old who has become a foster grandparent, I ask you all to believe that you can contribute to your community and your country. And in so doing, you will find the best in yourself.

You will learn the lessons about your life that you might not ever learn any other way. You will learn again that each of us has the spark of potential to accomplish something truly and enduringly unique. You will experience the satisfaction of making a connection in a way with another person that you could do in no other way. You will learn that the joy of mastering a new skill or discovering a new insight is exceeded only by the joy of helping someone else do the same thing. You will know the satisfaction of being valued not for what you own or what you earn or what position you hold but just because of what you have given to someone else. You will understand in personal ways the wisdom of the words spoken years ago by Martin Luther King, who said, "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve."

I ask you all, my fellow Americans, to support our proposal for **national service** and to live a proposal for **national service**, to learn the meaning of America at its best, and to recreate for others America at its best. We are not just another country. We have always been a special kind of community, linked by a web of rights and responsibilities and bound together not by bloodlines but by beliefs. At an age in time when people all across the world are being literally torn apart by racial hatreds, by ethnic hatreds, by religious divisions, we are a nation, with all of our problems, where people can come together across racial and religious lines and hold hands and work together not just to endure our differences but to celebrate them. I ask you to make America celebrate that again.

I ask you, in closing, to commit yourselves to this season of service because America needs it. We need every one of you to live up to the fullest of your potential, and we need you to reach those who are not here and who will never hear this talk and who will never have the future they could otherwise have if not for something that you could do. The great challenge of your generation is to prove that every person here in this great land can live up to the fullest of their God-given capacity. If we do it, the 21st century will be the American century. The American dream will be kept alive if you will today answer the call to service.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:15 p.m. at Rutgers University. In his remarks, he referred to Nakia Tomlinson, a student at Rutgers University, and Benjamin Barber, founder of the Rutgers Civic Education and Community Service Program.

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Public Papers of the Presidents, April 30, 1993

Public Papers of the Presidents

April 30, 1993**CITE:** 29 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 728**LENGTH:** 4815 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks on the **National Service** Initiative at the University of New Orleans**BODY:**

Thank you very much. I ought to quit while I'm ahead. [Laughter] It is wonderful to be back in New Orleans and in Louisiana and to have the first chance I've had since the election to thank you for your support, your electoral votes, and the education you gave me on my many trips here during the campaign last year. I'm glad to be back on this campus. I want to thank your student body president, Robert Styron. I thought he gave a good speech. I think he's got a future in politics, don't you? [Applause] And Chancellor O'Brien. I want to thank Senator Breaux for his kind remarks and for his leadership of the Democratic Leadership Council. I want to acknowledge the presence here of Senator Johnston and many members of the Louisiana House and many other Members of the United States Congress, along with many others who are here with the Democratic Leadership Council, including my good friend and former colleague, the Governor of New Mexico, Bruce King, who's here. There are two members of my Cabinet here, the Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, and the Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Epsy, also a DLC Vice Chair.

I want to thank all the people who are here representing volunteer organizations. I met with some young people just before I came in here who are scattered around near me across the way. [Applause] Absolutely no enthusiasm in that place. [Laughter] From the Delta Service Corps., from VISTA, from Summerbridge, from Teach for America, we also have some students here, apart from all of you from UNO, we have some students here who have worked in service projects at Xavier University and at Tulane. We also have people here who have been involved in service for a long time from ACTION, from the Older Americans Volunteer Program, from the National Association of Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents and the National Association of Retired Senior Volunteers. All these people I am very grateful to.

I'd like to just acknowledge in general the people who are here from law enforcement organizations and firefighters' organizations and public employees and teachers' groups who have helped us on this **national service** project. And I want to say a special word of thanks to three other people. First of all, Gen. David Jones, a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who has worked very hard helping us put together this program, who is here. General Jones, thank you for being here. Secondly, a remarkable gentleman from New Jersey, an immensely successful businessman who retired early and is devoting his entire life to community service to rebuild the lives and the neighborhoods of the people in his community in New Jersey and now helping others around the country, a founding member of the Points of Light Foundation, Mr. Ray Chambers, who is here. And I'd like to pay a little special attention to two members of Congress who are not here and to one who is, for their long work on the whole idea of **national service**. The two in the Senate who are not here are Senator Harris Wofford from Pennsylvania and Senator Sam Nunn from Georgia. And then Representative Dave McCurdy from Oklahoma, thank you for all the work you've done on this over the years.

I am glad to be here. You know, when I come down here I always sort of relax. I don't know why that is. I timed it just in time for the Jazz Festival, but I left my saxophone at the White House.

This is the 100th day of my administration. In Washington, some say it marks a milestone. But in many ways it's just another day at the office for what we're trying to do in changing America. In the last 99 days we have worked relentlessly to address the pressing and long-ignored needs of

the American people and to bring the Government something it has not seen in a long time: an acknowledgment that bold action is needed, and needed now, to secure and enlarge America's future, and that in order to do it we not only have to change programs, we have to change the way the Government works and engage the energies of the American people in the process.

In the last 100 days I think we have begun to change the direction in which our country has been going for a long time, and to go toward a new direction more like the one the American people demanded last November. We've also started an unprecedented debate in our Nation's capital about big ideas and better lives across our Nation, ideas that in many cases were shaped and nurtured by some of the people who are here today, as Senator Breaux said earlier, the members of the Democratic Leadership Council, of which I am proud to be a founding member. Unlike most organizations, the DLC has done more than just talk about the problems in our country. It has made an honest effort to develop real ideas about how to restore the American economy, and make the Government work, and rebuild the confidence and the link that exists between the American people and their Government when things are at their best here. And it's been a laboratory for experimentation and solutions.

During my years with the DLC we really tried to refine our philosophy of what it would mean to take not only the Democratic Party but the United States of America in a new direction, to make our country work again and to reward work and family, to encourage education and enterprise, to establish what I have often called a new covenant with the American people: Creating opportunity but demanding responsibility from all so that once again we could be a true American community where we know and believe and live as if we're all in this together. This group has conceived many of the ideas that I've advocated since I've been in Washington from setting a limit on welfare and putting people to work to police reform and community policing to rewarding work of low-income working people by having an earned income tax credit that would lift the working poor with children out of poverty. So we could say if you work 40 hours a week in this country, you have a child in the house, you ought not to be poor. These are the kinds of things that this organization has done. They helped to develop the idea I want to talk to you today about that has so much to do with the future of the young people here and throughout our country: **national service**. This is an organization about ideas.

Now in Washington, as you might imagine, we don't always agree with one another. And that is good -- that's why we've got a system where the Government's divided up and we have two parties and we have people fighting all the time -- as long as it's about ideas. But too often we've seen that the debate over big ideas gets mired in petty politics. I know one thing: The American people are tired of gridlock and petty politics. If we're going to fight, they want us to fight over ideas and the future of this country.

In the past 99 days we tried to address the problems the American people told me they wanted to be addressed. We focused more than anything else on the economy, passing the outline of a budget that will reduce the deficit by more than \$ 500 billion, increase investment in education and technologies and the things that will create the economy of the 21st century that all of you need so that you'll have good and decent jobs and a decent future laying the groundwork for a more prosperous tomorrow.

Just in 100 days we've announced a policy to help to convert the defense cutbacks and the economic opportunities for people who are losing their jobs because of the military cutbacks; to take a new direction in technology to create more opportunities for our people; to be more aggressive in preserving the environment, but to do it in a way that creates jobs, not a way that costs jobs; to have a trade policy that will really reflect our common interest with other nations and expanding jobs and opportunities everywhere. We've begun the long-overdue renovation of the American economic base. The question now, unlike 100 days ago, the question is now not whether we're going to reduce the deficit but how and how much. The question now is not whether the Government will have a new partnership with the private sector to shape the economy but exactly what the details will be and how much our part will be.

We've also taken on the issue of health care, something millions of Americans cried out for last year. I got a letter today from a young woman I shook hands with whose -- literally, her life is on the line, and she cannot get health insurance. It is wrong that in this Nation -- we are the only advanced country in the world with 34 million people without health insurance. It is wrong that millions of Americans cannot change their jobs without losing their health insurance because they or a child or a spouse has been sick. It is wrong that the price of health care goes up 2.5 times the rate of inflation every year. And it is wrong that we spend 30 percent more of our income than any other country on Earth on health care and have less to show for it. But it is also wrong to assume that there is some magic, quick answer. That's why we've been working with a task force headed by the First Lady and over 400 people from all aspects of health care to do something about this.

But now, for the American people the issue is no longer whether we're going to address the health care crisis, whether we're going to provide security to hard-working middle class Americans, whether we're going to cover the people who aren't covered, whether we're going to control costs, but how are we going to do it and how fast and when are we going to begin. I hope the answer is soon. And not too soon is soon enough for me.

There was a lot of discussion last year about how bad the Government was, and it didn't work, and it was bloated, it needed a change. Look at the last 100 days; I've tried to set an example by offering a budget to reduce the White House staff by 25 percent; by putting the lid on and reducing the Federal bureaucratic expenses, the administrative expenses of the Federal Government by over \$ 10 billion; by moving dramatically to reduce the influence of special interests on Executive Branch appointments by having the toughest ethics laws and restrictions on people becoming lobbyists for other interests when they leave the payroll of the President of the United States; by asking the Vice President to share the most sweeping review of the way the Federal Government works in a generation, with a promise of real reform and reinventing Government, something else this organization has long believed in.

We are moving. And the Congress is moving to join. The Congress has voted to cut the administrative costs of running the Congress, something many of you never thought you would see happen. They did that. The House of Representatives voted yesterday to give the President of the United States a modified line-item veto, and I hope the Senate will follow their lead. I hope soon they will send to my desk the motor voter bill which will make it easier for young people and other people to vote and participate in their country's political process. And there will be campaign finance reform and lobby reform legislation and a crime bill that will put more police on the street and give us the capacity we need to take our communities back. These things are going on. The question is no longer whether we're going to reform the way Government works but how fast and how much and how well. And those are the right questions, my fellow Americans, good questions to ask.

And now I come to the last, and in many ways the most important issue that we have tried to address -- the economy, yes; health care, yes; reform in the way the Government works, yes -- but also what about the American people. How can each American make a contribution? How can each American do the work that all Americans must, taking responsibility for himself or herself and growing up into a vibrant community? We have tried to address those issues as well. The buzz word now people use is empowerment. I used to call it responsibility. I often have said, and I want to reiterate today, the United States Government cannot create an opportunity for anyone who will not be responsible enough to seize it. Opportunity is a two-way street and requires responsibility. That is the only way we'll ever rebuild the American community.

In the days and months ahead, you will see the Secretary of Education talk about his remarkable education program to provide tougher national standards in education but also to give people at the grassroots level more flexibility in making public education work. You will see the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development talk about how we can empower even the poorest Americans to start their own businesses, save their own money, and take control of their own future. You will see other people talking about how we can reform the welfare system. All of these things are at the core of the notion that we ought to make it possible for every

American to live up to the fullest of his or her God-given ability. And that is what in the end **national service** is all about: helping ourselves and helping each other at the same time.

On this 100th day of my administration I want to recommit myself and those who work with me to the values that have made our Nation without peer in all human history, those of opportunity, responsibility, community, and respect for one another. Today I want to propose applying those values to a revolution of opportunity for our hard-pressed families and for those who have been left out. As a first step we're going to ease the terms of college loans, helping students from middle and lower-middle income families to clear a major path to the American dream, the path of higher education. In return we'll demand responsibility from young people. We'll make it easier to borrow money and much easier to pay it off. You can't just default on the loan. And we will also offer the young people of America the opportunity of paying their loans back by serving their communities in a new program of **national service**.

In just a few days I will send to Congress two bills containing our proposals, first to strengthen college opportunity and to establish **national service**. Together they will revive America's commitment to community and make affordable the cost of a college education for every American. It's no secret that over the last 10 or 12 years the cost of a college education is about the only essential think that's gone up even more rapidly than health care costs. And middle class parents, and even upper middle class parents, not to mention lower income people, have borne the burden, paying now about five percent of median income just to put one child through a 4 year in-State public college. It costs an average of over \$ 5,200 a year for that education. That means families are depleting savings and many students are faced with cutting back to a part-time course load or having to drop out simply because of the cost of a college education. A college dropout is now more than twice the high school dropout rate. We cannot afford that, and we can do better.

I propose a new way to finance college for millions of students who seek loans every year. We call it EXCEL account. With it, students can repay the loans they take out not with a percentage of the loan they borrowed but with a percentage of their actual earnings. Now think about that. For students driven by debt into careers with high pay and low satisfaction this can be very liberating. Take a student torn, for example, between pursuing a career in teaching and corporate law. This student now can at least make the career choice based on what he or she wants to do and not the size of the outstanding student loan, because we propose to let everybody have the option of paying the student loan back based on how much they earn not just how much they owe. That is an incredible incentive.

However, under the current system, as many of you know, students faced with big bills or just inconvenient responsibilities have too often taken the irresponsible route and defaulted on their loans or have been found in default because they couldn't find a job. Often times there's no serious effort to collect the loan because the Government guarantees 90 percent of it. So if the bank makes the loan, it costs more than 10 percent to go collect it. What's the result? The taxpayers every year pay about \$ 3 billion on other people's loans, money that could be spent on your education, on the schools here, on the future of the children here, just for bad loans. It isn't right.

Under our system, the Department of Education would engage the Internal Revenue Service. We would have the payroll records. And you wouldn't be able to beat the bill because you would have to pay the loan back as a percentage of your income, if you choose, but you'd have to pay it because you pay taxes and because we have your records and because you won't be able to get out of it. And that is the right thing to do.

But these EXCEL accounts are just the beginning. We hope they will lead more and more Americans not only to seize the opportunity of a college education and to exert a stronger sense of responsibility but also to seek to serve their communities through a program of **national service**. It was Thomas Jefferson who first told the American people in essence that the more you know, the more you owe. In his words, and I quote, "A debt of service is due from every man to his country proportioned to the bounties which nature and fortune have measured to him." This statement reminds us that values never go out of fashion, that civic responsibility is as good for democracy

today as it was when Thomas Jefferson said that, and that if you really want to be the best citizen of your country, you have to give something back to your country. With **national service**, we can literally open up a new world to a new generation of Americans where higher learning goes hand-in-hand with the higher purpose of addressing our unmet needs, our educational, our social, our environmental needs, to secure the future that we all will share. **National service** will mark the start of a new era for America in which every citizen, every one of you, can become an agent of change armed with the knowledge and experience that a college education brings, and ready to transform the world in which we live, city by city, community by community, block by block. I say to you, we need you.

You know, there's a lot of talk in America today, and I spend hours every week worrying about the effect that automation and technology is having on employment. Indeed, as we see the productivity of American enterprises rise, their need for workers goes down because they can do more with computers than they used to do with people. So people ask me all the time, where will we find the jobs for this new generation of Americans? How can we drive this unemployment rate down? But if you look around this country at all the human problems, all the homeless people, all the environmental waste dumps in our cities and our rural areas, all the problems that we've got in every community in America, and see all the kids that are in trouble -- 15 million of them at risk and needing somebody to pay attention to -- you know where the work needs to be.

Late last night, when I was preparing to come down here, I took a little time off at my desk and I read the letters that my staff had given me. And I got a letter from a woman who grew up with me. I've known her since we were in grade school. In this letter she said, "You know, someone asked me a couple of days ago: How are we going to save all these kids in this country that are in trouble?" And she said, "Without even thinking, I blurted out, the same way we lost them, one at a time." And so today my fellow Americans, I issue a call to **national service**, to Americans young and old, Democrats and Republicans, white, black, Hispanic, Asian and you name it, all of us that make up this great Nation. I call you to **national service** because it is only that together we can advance a tradition rooted in our people's history, helping our people to help themselves. And with **national service** we can rejoin the citizens in communities of this country, bonding each to the other with the glue of common purpose and real patriotism.

We have many young people here today, students of this place of higher learning where we're gathered. In you I know I see the builders of tomorrow. And I say to you, as good as the education is here and at the other great institutions represented here today and all across America, the power of academic learning is incomplete unless every American can share in it. That is the only way we can lift our whole country up. I say to you further that our country needs you. We need your knowledge and your initiative and your energy. We need you because you are still stripped and free of the cynicism that has paralyzed too many of your parents and your grandparents, and led us to spend too much time talking about what we can't do instead of seizing what we can. You are not afflicted by that, and I pray you never will be.

We need to make sure that we can use your energies and your talents. One way is by making sure that the low wages that public service often offers won't be a route to the poorhouse for someone with college loans. As I said, we're going to make it easier for you to pay off your college loan. But also, if you engage in **national service**, we'll make it easier for you to pay off a college debt or to earn credits toward it before you go to college, or while you're in college.

For each term of service, 1 or 2 years, participants in **national service** programs will receive benefits that can be used toward past, present, or future obligations, whether for college or advanced job training. You can get a college education and, in addition, through service, perhaps the best experience of your life. That's a pretty good investment.

I've talked a lot about the students here. And they do play a large part in this plan, but they're not alone. Here in New Orleans many of you already know what it means to make a difference in your community because you've just been doing that for a long time. And I'm very proud, as I said. I'm going to get another cheer about this, but one of the models that I had a little something to do

with is the Delta Service Corps, and I appreciate what they're doing. [Applause]

There are people here working to restore housing. There are people here working in other ways. I just want to mention three: Lawrence Williams, a team leader in the Corps who has helped to restore housing for low-income people with the local Habitat for Humanity Project; Jane Sullivan, a retired public schoolteacher and a former VISTA volunteer who helps rural communities gain better access to health care, housing, and other assistance; and a young person I met just a few moments ago, Parris Moore-Brown, who works with parents in housing programs for drug awareness outreach and now plans to work with the physically challenged. She says that she has no tolerance for self-pity, and she lives what she preaches. She hasn't been slowed by what her birth dealt her, a brittle bone disorder that has left her as an adult, and by her own measure, 4 feet, 2 1/4 inches tall. Where are you? Stand up on here so we can see you. After my meeting with her and the other young people today, I'd say she stands about 10 feet tall in America today. There are tens of thousands of people like Parris and Jane and Lawrence and those of you who are here with these service programs who are dying to be called to a new season of service, and we want to do that.

Another part of our plan is to build on the National and Community Service Act that was passed in 1990, and the already flourishing programs that are started and up and going in every State in this country. **National service** is not going to be a Federal bureaucracy; it's going to be operate at the grassroots with the real problems of real people and with the programs that work today. It will be locally driven because I trust the communities in this country to make decisions for themselves.

I also want to say that while we want very much to have young people in this program who are working toward earning credits for college or paying their college loans off through **national service**, we need so many other people in service projects. We need our older people who never will go back to college but have a lifetime of experience and energy to give to the young people of this country. We need young people who may not be old enough to drive a car or to qualify for this program but can have a dramatic impact on fellow students by helping them learn better study habits or just keeping them out of trouble. I've learned already that, as the parent of a teenager, that the peers can have a big impact on the shape and quality of a child's life. Even a child can serve in programs that now begin as early as kindergarten. We have no upper age limit in America, or lower age limit for being a good public servant.

To be successful, this national program will need the broad-based support of all the American people. Parents and children, churches and synagogues, colleges and universities and the potential providers and the beneficiaries of our services. In this vision of **national service**, everyone is a partner. And that includes, of course, the business community in this country. We need businesses to contribute to the effort, to match Federal money and local programs and to contribute at the national level, helping to make sure that the programs we choose are good ones indeed.

What will set this legislation apart from other similar efforts in the past that rewarded service to our country is that it will totally eliminate the Federal Government bureaucracy. And believe me, no one will miss that. We're going to set up a **national service** corporation that will run like a big venture capital outfit not like a bureaucracy. And communities, as I have said, will have the flexibility to make their own programs work. I think that I've seen enough today and I've heard enough of your applause to know that the American people are hungry for a chance to serve their country and to reap the rewards of civic pride and education in the process.

In answering this call our people are following a proud history. More than a century ago President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act, and the frontier of this country was settled by countless families who took up the challenge in exchange for 100 acres to call their own. In the 1930's President Roosevelt enlisted millions of young people to restore the environment through the Civilian Conservation Corps. FDR gave others a chance to support themselves through the buildings made possible by the Works Project Administration. I was in the United States Justice Department just yesterday, a building built in 1934 by people who were giving service to their country, and it's still a beautiful monument to the legacy of that kind of service. The parents of the

baby boom had the GI bill, which was one of the best investments our Government ever made. A generation ago, the young people of my generation saw suffering in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, and many rushed to the challenge laid down by President Kennedy when he created the Peace Corps, which became our country's greatest ambassador, building bridges of understanding to far off cultures. And now, three decades later, a challenge has been presented to all of you, a new challenge and an old one, as old as America and as new as your future.

A year ago when the Democratic Leadership Council met in New Orleans, I asked the following question: I said, I want you to think about what kind of citizens you're going to be -- *[inaudible]* -- administration that this was the day the American people were empowered to renew their Nation and their communities, to seize a better future for themselves, and to help all of us to be what the -- *[inaudible]* -- out of helping our fellow citizens and ourselves to become what we ought to be, this country will be all right.

Thank you very much, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Health and Physical Education Center at the university. In his remarks, he referred to Gregory O'Brien, Chancellor of the University of New Orleans. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

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