



Ruby Shamir  
07/28/99 11:39:09 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Paul A. Tuchmann/OVP@OVP

cc:

Subject: FMLA

Here is the sequence of FMLA:

- The President signed it in 1993. It was the first bill he signed. I am faxing you the remarks from the signing.
- At a 1996 roundtable with the VP the President announced the expansion of FMLA to give all workers an additional 24 hours of FMLA leave. I am faxing you those remarks as well.
- In April 1997 the President expanded FMLA giving Federal workers the 24 hours of FMLA leave. I am faxing you that paper.
- Below is the most recent proposal from January's SOTU to expand FMLA to 10 million more workers:

### **FMLA Expansion**

The President is proposing again to extend the benefits of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) -- the first piece of legislation that the President signed into law -- to ten million more American workers. Today, workers are eligible for up to 12 weeks of FMLA-protected leave to care for a newborn or adopted child, to attend to their own serious health needs, or to care for a seriously ill parent, child or spouse -- if they work at a business with 50 or more employees. By covering workers in businesses with 25 or more workers, 10 million more American workers will be covered by the FMLA. The President is also calling for expanding the law to allow FMLA-eligible workers to take up to 24 hours of additional leave each year to meet specified family obligations. Leave could be taken to: (1) participate in school activities, such as parent-teacher conferences; (2) accompany one's child to routine dental or medical appointments; and (3) accompany an elderly relative to routine medical appointments or other professional services.

Finally, here is the announcement the President made at Grambling State including the internal Q&A and public press paper. This is not an expansion of FMLA, but is only related to FMLA because it is leave oriented. You should know that we do not yet have the regs referenced in the announcement. Let me know if you have questions.



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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 5, 1993

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Today, I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 1, the "Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993." I believe that this legislation is a response to a compelling need -- the need of the American family for flexibility in the workplace. American workers will no longer have to choose between the job they need and the family they love.

This legislation mandates that public and private employers with at least fifty workers provide their employees with family and medical leave. At its core is the provision for employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for the care of a newborn or newly adopted child, for the care of a family member with a serious medical condition, or for their own illness. It also requires employers to maintain health insurance coverage and job protection for the duration of the leave. It sets minimum length of service and hours of work requirements before employees become eligible.

The need for this legislation is clear. The American workforce has changed dramatically in recent years. These changes have created a substantial and growing need for family and medical leave for working Americans.

In 1965, about 35 percent of mothers with children under 18 were labor force participants. By 1992, that figure had reached 67 percent. By the year 2005, one of every two people entering the workforce will be women.

The rising cost of living has also made two incomes a necessity in many areas of this country, with both parents working or looking for work in 48 percent, or nearly half, of all two parent families with children in the United States.

Single parent families have also grown rapidly, from 16 percent of all families with children in 1975 to 27 percent in 1992. Finally, with America's population aging, more working Americans have to take time off from work to attend to the medical needs of elderly parents.

As a rising number of American workers must deal with the dual pressures of family and job, the failure to accommodate these workers with adequate family and medical leave policies has forced too many Americans to choose between their job security and family emergencies. It has also resulted in inadequate job protection for working parents and other employees who have serious health conditions that temporarily prevent them from working. It is neither fair nor necessary to ask working Americans to choose between their jobs and their families -- between continuing their employment and tending to their own health or to vital needs at home.

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Although many enlightened companies have recognized the benefits to be realized from a system providing for family and medical leave, not all do. We all as a nation must join hands and extend the ethic of long-term workplace relationships and reciprocal commitment between employer and employee. It is only when workers can count on a commitment from their employer that they can make their own full commitments to their jobs. We must extend the success of those forward-looking workplaces where high-performance teamwork has already begun to take root and where family and medical leave already is accepted.

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics support the conclusion that American business has not been fully responsive to the need of workers for family and medical leave. This data showed that, in 1991, for private business establishments with 100 workers or more, 37 percent of all full-time employees (and 19 percent of all part-time employees) had unpaid maternity leave available to them, and only 26 percent of all full-time employees in such establishments had unpaid paternity leave available. The most recently available data for smaller business establishments (those with fewer than 100 workers) are for 1990, and show that only 14 percent of all these employees had unpaid maternity leave available, and only 6 percent had unpaid paternity leave available.

The insufficient response to the family and medical leave needs of workers has come at a high cost to both the American family and to American business. There is a direct correlation between health and job security in the family home and productivity in the workplace. When businesses do not give workers leave for family needs, they fail to establish a working environment that can promote heightened productivity, lessened job turnover, and reduced absenteeism.

We all bear the cost when workers are forced to choose between keeping their jobs and meeting their personal and family obligations. When they must sacrifice their jobs, we all have to pay more for the essential but costly safety net. When they ignore their own health needs or their family obligations in order to keep their jobs, we all have to pay more for social services and medical care as neglected problems worsen.

The time has come for Federal legislation to bring fair and sensible family and medical leave policies to the American workplace. Currently, the United States is virtually the only advanced industrialized country without a national family and medical leave policy. Now, with the signing of this bill, American workers in all 50 States will enjoy the same rights as workers in other nations. This legislation balances the demands of the workplace with the needs of families. In supporting families, it promotes job stability and efficiency in the American workplace.

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 sets a standard that is long overdue in working America. I am very pleased to sign this legislation into law.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
February 5, 1993.

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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 choose 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 us 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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WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary  
(Nashville, Tennessee)

For Immediate Release

June 24, 1996

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
AND VICE PRESIDENT  
IN OPENING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON  
BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY

Tennessee Performing Arts Center  
Nashville, Tennessee

11:30 A.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Well, Mr. Vice President, I kind of hate to talk, that panel was so good. I sort of -- I think they were the keynote, and I'll just try to finish it with a grace note.

I'd like to begin by thanking the Vice President and Tipper for showing this consistent commitment to the American family. I mean, it's one thing to have one of these conferences, but to have one every year and have each one be better than the last, and to be able to demonstrate to the American people that we are building on it and actually doing something with it -- I mean, after that conference last year, I left here with a renewed commitment to make sure that when we passed the telecommunications bill it had the V chip in it. I left here with a renewed sense that, because of the media people that were here, that we could work with the leaders of the entertainment industry to develop a television rating system, and we did. And I believe we'll be able to get an agreement to increase the quality and quantity of educational time on television.

And I believe a lot of good things will come out of this conference as well. So, for -- we're indebted to them for a lot of things, but this will be a lasting legacy. (Applause.)

I also want to thank Dr. Erickson and Representative Purcell, Speaker Naifeh, Governor Wilder, and the other officials that are here -- Attorney General Burston, Attorney General Humphrey, and state legislators from across the country. And I thank you for coming.

I'd like to begin by saying you could probably tell that we're all kind of into this, and that's a very important thing for me for you to know. I believe as we move into this new era that the people of this country are going to have more chances to live out their dreams than any generation of Americans before them. But we have to do it in a way that, number one, gives everybody a chance to live out their dreams, not just a few -- or not even just many or most, but everybody who is willing to be a responsible citizen should have a chance to live out their dreams. And we have to do it in a way that brings us together, instead of dividing us.

This is an incredibly diverse country. This is an incredibly complex and diverse economy. We are being more and more drawn into a global -- not just a global economy, but a global society. And it is absolutely imperative that we have a commitment to dealing with these challenges in a way that increases opportunity for all and brings us together.

When Hillary and I and Al and Tipper all sort of moved into the White House, one of things that I tried to do was to kind of get a fix on the people who were working for us. Now, a lot of people who work for the White House are young people who haven't started their families yet, and that's probably good because they work these crazy hours and they never seem to get tired. (Laughter.) I use to be that way myself. (Laughter.) And then a lot of people who work for us, all their children are grown, so they can accommodate bizarre schedules and long hours.

But we have a significant number of people in very responsible positions who still have children who are either school age or pre-school age. And one of the things I told them when we started this was that we were on a mission to change America for the better, but it wasn't as important as taking care of their kids. And if they ever thought that their families were really suffering, they ought to quit, because the most important job any of us have, starting with the President, is to be a good parent. (Applause.) And several of them have taken me up on my admonition -- (laughter) -- sometimes at great personal loss to me.

One of the most brilliant people who ever worked in the White House, at least in the last several years, Bill Galston -- a man who made an enormous contribution to our administration, full of new ideas and ways to move America into the 21st century -- came to me one day and he said, "My boy keeps asking where I am. He's 10 years old. You can get somebody else to do this job; no one else can do that job. I have to go home. You said I could, and now I have to." And he did. And I think he'll never regret it.

My Deputy Chief of Staff, Erskine Bowles, whose wife went to college with Hillary -- his wife is a very prominent executive in the textile industry, and her job got bigger and bigger and she was going to have to travel more. And they just had one child left at home and he was going into his senior year. And Erskine said, you know, he said, "I just love working here. I love public service, and I don't need the money. But my boy should not be at home in his last year in high school. And I don't want him to ever wonder, not a single time, for the rest of his life, whether he was ever the most important thing in the world to his parents -- and I'm going home." And he did. And his son just graduated from high school and he's going to Princeton next year. He made the right decision.

So I say that to all of you to try to put this into some sort of context, and also to try to emphasize what I was saying earlier. One of you said -- one of the panelists said, you know, we don't live to work, we work so we can live; and we hope that we find fulfillment in our work and we do good things. Politics, if you will, is one step removed from that. What is the purpose of the national enterprise? Well, the first thing we're supposed to do is to give you a safe world to live in -- no Cold War, but new threats, terrorism and things like that.

The second thing we're supposed to do is try to help

give you a safe country within which to live -- safe streets and a clean environment and healthy food. The third thing we're supposed to do is kind of create a structure of opportunity and a structure of fairness, so that everybody has a chance and we all have a chance to grow together. And if you think about the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the whole history of our nation, it's been one long struggle to make this country a country with more opportunity, more fairness, more unity, living up to the ideals that the founders enshrined.

So that people can then make all their own decisions -- and most of the decisions made have nothing to do with government, about how they're going to organize work -- and, hopefully, the work will permit them to live good personal lives and build strong families. And that's the way I look at my job.

Now, what we have been talking about today are the worries of parenthood. It seems to me there are at least three big challenges that parents face today. Parents are worried about -- to go back to what Mrs. Jordan said, even if I teach my kids good values, will something in the society and the culture change my child's life or destroy it. Will my child be subject to violence, to gangs, to drugs, to teen pregnancy? Will my child be subject, even long before that, to cultural influences or other dangers over which I basically have no control, especially if I have to work and my kid is home watching television four or five hours a day?

Dad says cigarettes are bad for you and besides that it's illegal. Right before you get out of the car to go to school or get out of the school bus, you see this great Joe Camel ad on the billboard. You know, Joe Camel is more well-known to six-year-olds than Bill Clinton. (Laughter.) And more interesting looking. I mean, you know, let's face the facts. (Laughter) I mean, it's an interesting, brilliant strategy.

Mother says, son, you can't be violent; sticks and stones can break your bones; words won't hurt you; don't get mad; walk away. And then Mom goes to work. The kid flips on the television and watches four hours of people killing each other with assault weapons.

So it's a challenging thing. That's what last year's conference was all about. And again, I want to take my hat off to the people in the entertainment industry who are coming to grips with this really tough problem of rating television programs.

You know, it's pretty easy to rate movies. There is a certain fixed number of them that come out every year. You just think about how many channels you have at home and how many hours a day those channels are on, and how many different programs are on them, and you get an idea of the staggering task that the entertainment industry has voluntarily taken on itself so that parents, by the time we get V chips in all these new television sets, so that parents will actually have a guide so they'll know what they're doing to program the V chip and use it.

But it's a move in the right direction. It's what we're trying to do when our administration became the first one in history to take on the whole issue of the access of young people to exposure to tobacco advertising and sales. Now, it's illegal in every state in the country for kids to buy cigarettes, but 3,000 kids a day start smoking and a thousand of them are going to die sooner because of it. There is no other public health problem in America with those kind of numbers. So we have to try to do something about it. (Applause.)

I want to say a special word of thanks again to Al Gore, who lost his only and beloved sister to lung cancer, for being a constant voice of conscience in our administration, for getting us to come to grips with this. This is what they call in Washington politics a character builder. It's no accident that no one else had ever done this before. And it's not a free decision. But it was the right thing to do, and we're trying to do it to try to create a framework within which other people can build their lives.

Even the Crime Bill itself was designed to create a framework. The Safe and Drug Free Schools initiative; or putting 100,000 police on the streets in community policing; or taking the assault weapons off the street; or passing the Brady Bill, which has kept 60,000 felons, fugitives and stalkers from buying handguns in just three years -- that's an important thing. (Applause.) All I can do is to create a framework within which others are going to be given the opportunity to change the culture of this country community by community.

But let me tell you, lest you grow fainthearted, we're about to enter the fourth year in a row of violent crime dropping in America. So don't let anybody tell you it can't be done. It can be done, we can change this. But we are a long way from home and we still have breathtaking rates of violence among juveniles. You go back to what Robert said about young people needing to be taught to be parents and to be responsible. So I thank you for that.

When we set up this national service program, AmeriCorps, what we were trying to do was not have a government program, but to try to give people a chance to set up a structure within which people could go out in their communities and solve their own problems. So I wanted to deal with that.

The second pressure I think parents face is increasingly financial. You heard Ms. Allen talk about that. It's no accident that, on average, families today are spending more hours at work and less hours at home than they were 25 years ago. Don't let anybody tell you that Americans aren't hardworking. We are working fools. (Laughter.) Some of us because we like it, others because we have to. But we do it, we show up. We show up. All the surveys show most people on welfare are dying to go to work. There are 1.3 million fewer people on welfare today than we had three and a half years ago, partly because we're giving the states the ability to create opportunities and then move people to work. This is a working country. But you have to be able to create a strong and secure family. Otherwise, the harder you work, the more you fall behind and the more frustrated people get.

Now, what can the government do about that? Well, we can create a framework -- we've cut the deficit in half, and got interest rates down, and expanded trade, and invested in technology and infrastructure and education, and the American people produced almost 10 million new jobs. That's a good thing. It's a good thing. The interest rates brought mortgage rates down, we've got almost 4 million new homeowners in the last three and a half years.

But that doesn't resolve all the problems. There's still -- this economy churns so much, and so many of our jobs are now being created in smaller companies where people normally are used to having less security, that we have to find ways, I

believe, to reward work by giving people lifetime access to education, training, health care and retirement.

That's what this debate in Washington is about over the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill. It would give 25 million people access to health insurance by simply saying you don't lose your health insurance if you have to change jobs or if someone in your family has been sick. That's what insurance is for.

That's what the small business package of pension reforms that we sent to Congress is all about. It basically says if you're a self-employed person or you work in a little business and you work for a whole series of small businesses and you're always changing jobs, or you're out of work for a while, you ought to be able to take out a pension and keep it even through the bad times, and you ought not to have to wait a long time when you move from one job to the other to know that that pension is secure and seamless and continuous. As far as I know, there is no opposition in the Congress to this package in either party, and I'm hoping we can get that out.

The Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Labor worked very hard on a proposal to collapse all the job training programs in the country. Somebody loses their job, they just get a voucher worth \$2,600 a year to go to the local community college or do whatever is necessary to get job training. And these are the kinds of things that we think are very important.

And the last thing I would say is that we know that the fastest growing essential in every family's budget in the last 12 years, believe it or not, was not health care, it was the cost of college -- was the only thing that went up more rapidly than health care costs. So we proposed to give families a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of college tuition and to make the 13th and 14th years of college universally available in America by giving families a tax credit for the cost of going to a community college.

So we could say to people, look, it's just not enough to have a high school diploma anymore, and if you're just coming out of high school or if you've been in the work force for years and you want to go back, everybody, one hundred percent of the people ought to have guaranteed access to at least two years of education.

Now, these things I think will change the framework within which families have to live and work, and will give them more income security and more stability. It doesn't guarantee any results, but at least it sets up a framework within which families can succeed.

The third thing, though, that we have heard a lot about today is time. A lot of people say, I can make money, but if I do I have to give up all my time. And this is a very important thing. There are so many families, two-parent families that are working two full-time jobs and a part-time job or two. There are so many single parents who are working two jobs or working so much overtime they're worried about whether they will ever see their kids.

And I think about this a lot. You know, when Hillary and I were young parents and she had already spent many years studying all this -- she took an extra year in law school

to work at the Child Study Center where we were in law school so that she would know a lot about the impact of the law on children and their interests. And I'll never forget, one day I was working on something, working like crazy, and Chelsea was about a year old, and she said, you know all that stuff they tell you about quality time, she said it's about half not true. She said, time counts; show up. (Laughter.) You know, time counts. (Applause.)

And I can remember a lot of nights when I would read my daughter to sleep and I would fall asleep before she would. And she would elbow me and say, "Dad, finish the book, finish the book." (Laughter.) But it meant something. Even the nights when I wasn't very good, you know, it meant something. And I'm proud to say that my daughter is about to be a senior in high school and she can still count on one hand the number of things that I have missed over her whole life. But I'll tell you something, she hasn't forgotten a single one of them. (Laughter.) And sometimes I hear, you remember when I was in the second grade, we had such and you were -- but I like that. I like that. I'm glad she felt entitled to complain.

And when Katherine Wright was talking about the videotapes -- one of the great highlights of my recent life is that we did that in reverse, Katherine. I was in Russia meeting with President Yeltsin when Chelsea had her junior prom, and she did a videotape so she could send a message to her dad that she was sorry that I couldn't send her off. And I thought to myself, well, that's one she didn't hold against me. And that kind of bothers me. She has reached the age when I'm not around, she doesn't hold it against me as much, but at least -- (laughter) -- at least I have a film of it.

Every person is entitled to build that memory bank. Somebody who is out there working for six bucks an hour in a factory, they are just as entitled to build that kind of a memory bank as the President of the United States. (Applause.) They're just as entitled to it. (Applause.)

And let me ask you also to look at this from the children's point of view. We did a great job here -- all of these companies and the public employees that are here, and the people in the federal government who do a good job of this, we talk about how it makes for happier workers, and happier parents make more productive workers, and you make more money. And you see that immediately. But let me ask you to think about this over the long haul.

Think about the cumulative impact of all those extra stories at bedtime. Fifteen years later you have a more literate citizenry. Think about the cumulative impact of the extra hour or two helping your child with homework. Fifteen years down the road you have a more productive citizenry. Think about what it means to sit at your sick child's bedside. By the way, sometimes they don't make it. Fifteen years from now you have people who are freed from the bitterness of thinking that they were deprived of the right to share what life they had with their children. It may seem small, but it may mean the difference in whether you raise a whole bunch of productive citizens or self-absorbed and completely alienated people. It may make the difference in whether people when they grow up live lives of responsibility or lives of rage, that they still -- they never quite understand.

So we talked a lot of about how this can be done and

you can make money today about it because people would be happy and more productive, and that's terrible important. But if you think about it in generational terms, which is how we ought to be thinking about it, it can also shape what this country looks like way into the 21st century. That's why in some ways the first bill I signed as President, the Family and Medical Leave law, may be the most important, because of the framework it established for other people to do things.

I can tell you this, that I still talk to people all the time -- about 10 days ago or so we had the Children's Miracle Network and all the children's hospitals, telethon people, in the White House. And I was upstairs and they said, Mr. President, these people are downstairs, and would you like to go down and say hello to them. So I did. And they all these children who had been desperately sick -- some of them were well now, some of them were still sick -- and their parents, one from each state. And these kids were -- they had been through a lot, and their parents had been through a lot. And most of their parents were just working people. And two of them on the way out, separately, said to me, I do not know what I would have done without the Family and Medical Leave law. It enabled me to take care of my child without hurting my family, without losing my job. (Applause.)

Twelve million people have now taken advantage of that law. And a recent study by a bipartisan commission on leave said that 9 out of 10 companies involved said the act did not cost them any money or done anything to their profits. And obviously, since -- and let me put it in some larger context. I'm about to go to Europe in a couple of days to the annual meeting of the G-7 countries, the Big Seven economies. In the last three and a half years, those economies have created a total of 10 million jobs, 9.7 million in the United States and 300,000 in the other six. So the Family Leave law did not hurt the American economy, it helped the American economy. (Applause.)

Now, again I say the most important thing is for us to have a framework. Then, by far, more significant would be changing the culture of America -- have, as Vance Opperman said, having more companies follow the leads of the companies that are here. But I do believe that we've had a lot of time now to think about this and work on this in the last three years. I've listened to people talk about it. I believe there are two more changes we can make that would help the American economy, not hurt business, and strengthen families. And I want to propose them here today in the hope that you will bring us the same good fortune that you did last year with the V chip and the telecommunications bill.

First of all, the Family and Medical Leave law has done a lot of good, but it is extremely narrow in its purpose. In other words, you're entitled to time off without losing your job in a workplace of 50 employees or more if there's a medical crisis involving a parent or a child, an immediate family member, or the birth of a child. That's better than it used to be. But I believe, just based on -- and you heard some of this today -- I believe we should expand the Family Leave law.

I would propose that we pass a Family Leave II that would allow employees to take up to 24 hours a year -- that's not a lot of time -- for parent-teacher conferences or for routine medical care for a child, a spouse or a parent -- because there are a lot of parents who cannot go to school to see the child's teacher because the work schedule and the schedule of the school

don't work. And there are a lot of times when there is a routine, what at least starts out to be a routine medical problem, where it really makes a difference if the parent can go -- especially with a young child -- or where there's nobody else to take the parent.

So I am very hopeful that we can get some support for this. (Applause.) I also think it would create a more honest workplace. I mean, I bet every one of us knows somebody who's called in sick or said they had car trouble so they could go meet with their child's teacher or take a child or a parent to the doctor. So I think that we ought to pass Family Leave II and I believe it will make a difference.

Secondly, I think we need to make the workplace more family-friendly, especially where a lot of overtime is concerned, and give people more flex-time in taking overtime either in income or in time with their families.

Now, traditionally, overtime has been a very important way for a lot of American workers to realize their dreams. Overtime is really the difference between a good middle-class existence and being in real trouble for a lot of workers. And I don't believe we should change that. But with more Americans working more hours simply spending time with your family can be a dream in itself -- a vacation, a maternity leave that goes beyond what's mandated by law, or if the child's in trouble and you just need some time to spend time with your child.

So today what I'm proposing is that we redefine compensation in a way that reflects the value of family and community. I'm going to send to Congress a flex-time initiative that will give employees this choice. If you work overtime you can be paid time and a half, just as you are now and just as the law requires. But if you want, you can take that payment in time; and for every hour you work overtime, you can take off an hour and a half. In this sense, the proposal is fundamental to redefining work time. Workers can put in time and get money, or they can put in time and get time. You can choose money in the bank or time on the clock.

It's important that this be a choice for employees. I should say that most employers in America would like this option. And there's a lot of support among employers for giving this kind of option. But it's also important how it's designed, because it will only work as a family-friendly decision if there's a genuine partnership -- which means, to go back to what our friend from Saturn says, this is a case where the employee has to make the decision.

And that's very important. There must be complete freedom to choose. If you're required to work overtime in your job or your given the chance to work overtime, then you, the

employee, must get the choice of whether to take the overtime in money or time. Otherwise it could simply open the door wide for abuse of the overtime laws, so that families that need the overtime income could fall behind. But if it is honestly administered and fairly given to the employee, think what a difference it could make in critical family situations. (Applause.)

Now, this is a case where more than anything else I think we have to change the culture. But we have to write strong

protections into the law. And if you have any doubt, just look at the front page of the Wall Street Journal today, which talks about, in contrast to these companies, the widespread abuse of the overtime laws and how a lot of people are entitled to it and can't get it. So we'll have to write this law in a way that protects the employees. Otherwise, we'll have even more of what is already a problem that is bigger than the Labor Department can manage with its present resources.

But I believe it's important. We have got to develop flex-time proposals that recognize that Americans have priorities at home as well as at work. But if we do this, if we give people the opportunity to earn overtime and then take it in cash or time at their discretion, and if we pass Family Leave II so that people can do some ordinary work that is profoundly important over the life of their children or their families as well as deal with the emergencies, I believe this will be a stronger country. I believe we will have a stronger economy. I know we will have stronger children in stronger families.

And that is the most important thing of all. So let me say again, I'm very grateful to Al and Tipper Gore for doing this. It means a lot to Hillary and me just to know that they're our friends and our partners, and that they share our values about this. There is nothing more important, I will say again, than doing a good job of raising our kids. I still think I did the right thing, even though I have lost some valued employees, in telling every one of them to leave if they ever thought their responsibilities at home were threatened.

The Talmud says: Every blade of grass has its angel that bends over it and whispers, "grow, grow." Our children are those blades of grass and we must be their better angels. Thank you and God bless you all. (Applause.)

END

12:01 P.M. CDT



## U.S. Office of Personnel Management

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

April 11, 1997

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

## SUBJECT: Expanded Family and Medical Leave Policies

I have strongly supported meeting Federal employees' family and medical leave needs through enactment of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) and the Federal Employees Family Friendly Leave Act of 1994 (FEFFLA). However, Federal employees often have important family and medical needs that do not qualify for unpaid leave under the FMLA or sick leave under the FEFFLA. I ask you to take immediate action to assist Federal workers further in balancing the demands of work and family.

Last year I proposed to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. My legislation would allow Federal and eligible private sector workers 24 hours of unpaid leave during any 12-month period to fulfill certain family obligations. Under the legislation, employees could use unpaid leave to participate in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of a child, including early childhood education activities; accompany children to routine medical and dental examinations; and tend to the needs of older relatives.

In furtherance of my proposed policy, I ask that you take immediate action within existing statutory authorities to ensure that Federal employees may schedule and be granted up to 24 hours of leave without pay each year for the following activities:

- (1) **SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**--to allow employees to participate in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of a child. This would include parent-teacher conferences or meetings with child-care providers, interviewing for a new school or child-care facility, or participating in volunteer activities supporting the child's educational advancement. In this memorandum, "school" refers to an elementary school, secondary school, Head Start program, or a child-care facility.
- (2) **ROUTINE FAMILY MEDICAL PURPOSES**--to allow parents to accompany children to routine medical or dental appointments, such as annual checkups or vaccinations. Although these activities are not currently covered by the FMLA, the FEFFLA does permit employees to use up to 13 days of sick leave each year for such purposes. Agencies should assure that employees are able to use up to 24 hours of leave without pay each year for these purposes in cases when no additional sick leave is available to employees.
- (3) **ELDERLY RELATIVES' HEALTH OR CARE NEEDS**--to allow employees to

accompany an elderly relative to routine medical or dental appointments or other professional services related to the care of the elderly relative, such as making arrangements for housing, meals, phones, banking services, and other similar activities. Although Federal employees can use unpaid leave or sick leave for certain of these activities under the FMLA or FEFFLA, such as caring for a parent with a serious health condition, agencies should ensure employees can use up to 24 hours of unpaid time off each year for this broader range of activities related to elderly relatives' health or care needs.

This new policy will assure that Federal employees can schedule and receive up to 24 hours away from the job each year for these family and medical circumstances. I also urge you to accommodate these employee needs as mission requirements permit, even when it is not possible for employees to anticipate or schedule leave in advance for these purposes. In addition, I ask that you support employees' requests to schedule paid time off--such as annual leave, compensatory time off, and credit hours under flexible work schedules--for these family activities when such leave is available to these employee. The Office of Personnel Management shall provide guidance to you on the implementation of this memorandum.

I encourage you to use a partnership approach with your employees and their representatives in developing an effective program that balances the employees' needs to succeed both at work and at home. I ask agencies, unions, and management associations to continue to work together to assess and improve the use of family-friendly programs and to make certain that employees are aware of the expanded family and medical leave policy.

• William J. Clinton

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*Updated 23 April, 1997*