

FOIA MARKER

**This is not a textual record. This is used as an
administrative marker by the William J. Clinton
Presidential Library Staff.**

Collection/Record Group: Clinton Presidential Records
Subgroup/Office of Origin: National AIDS Policy Office
Series/Staff Member: Patsy Fleming
Subseries: National AIDS Strategy

OA/ID Number: 9003
FolderID:

Folder Title:
[POTUS Remarks 6/25/93]

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
S	66	5	11	2

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN ANNOUNCEMENT OF KRISTINE M. GEBBIE
AS AIDS POLICY COORDINATOR

The South Lawn

8:43 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Thank you very much. First, let me welcome Speaker of the House and other distinguished members of the House of Representatives here. I appreciate their coming. I understand they were able to get a little more sleep than the senators were last night. I also want to welcome all the rest of you here.

Before I make the announcement that we're all here to witness and to be a part of, I do want to say a word about the vote that was cast early this morning in the United States Senate to pass a version of the economic plan which I presented to them which, to be sure, was changed to some extent from the House plan, but still reflected, I think, a remarkable degree of courage. Five hundred billion dollars in deficit reduction in the Senate plan, over 78 percent of the new revenues from people with incomes above \$200,000. A real commitment to significant budget cuts that were slightly greater than the ones in the House plan, and now clearly more budget cuts than tax increases.

The most important thing is that now both Houses of Congress, under very difficult circumstances with the same old rhetoric of the last 12 years flying at them, had the courage to try to change this country for the better.

What this means is incalculable. It means we can now move on to a Conference Committee with a clear signal to the financial markets that its interest rates should stay down and people should be able to refinance their homes and finance their businesses at lower interest rates, and that for the first time in a very long time an American President can go to a meeting of the G-7 nations in a position of economic strength, trying to lead a renewal of growth and opportunity all over the world.

So I very much appreciate that. I want to compliment Senator Mitchell, Senator Sasser, Senator Moynihan, in particular, for their leadership and the courage of the senators who voted in the way they did, so that we can go forward.

One of the things that was in this budget that has received almost no notice is a real commitment to intensifying our efforts to deal with the AIDS crisis, even in the midst of all the budget cutbacks. One of those important efforts is the naming of a new AIDS coordinator with a higher visibility, a more important

policy role and more influence in the national government than has been the case in the past.

It is my distinct pleasure today to announce the appointment of Kristine Gebbie as our nation's first AIDS Policy Coordinator. This position has never existed before, but circumstances now require us to look for unprecedented remedies to an unprecedented problem.

Today, as we toil against one of the most dreaded and mysterious diseases humanity has ever known, we must redouble our government's efforts to promote research, funding and treatment for AIDS. The appointment of Kristine Gebbie is part of our pledge to do that. She is a proven health care leader who will bring to the administration years of experience in the AIDS field. I'm confident she'll work hard to ensure that our nation no longer ignores an epidemic that has already claimed too many of our brothers and sisters, our parents and children, our friends and colleagues.

I'm particularly pleased that Kristine Gebbie is so committed to helping our AIDS effort, for she certainly is no stranger to the field. To begin with, she hales from the Pacific Northwest, one of our country's most progressive regions when it comes to health care.

A former nurse, she became the administrator of the Oregon Health Division, a position she held for 11 years, and later served as the Secretary of the Washington State Department of Health. Currently, she serves as a Special Consultant to the Department of Health and Human Services. She's also spent a lot of her time and energy on AIDS prevention.

Since 1989 she's served as chair of the Centers for Disease Control Advisory Committee on the Prevention of HIV Infection. She served on the Presidential Commission on AIDS. She was for three years a member of the National Academy of Sciences AIDS Oversight Committee, and she was chair of an HIV committee of state health officials around the United States.

AIDS is terrifying. It inflicts tragedy on too many families. But ultimately, it is a disease; one we can defeat just as we have defeated polio, many forms of cancer and other scourges in the history of our nation. How can we do it? With commitment and courage and constancy, and with vocal and responsible leadership from our nation's government. Already this administration has requested a large increase in funding for AIDS research and prevention, even in the face of our severe budget cutbacks. We are now moving toward full funding of the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act.

Our budget requested in Fiscal 1994 a 78-percent increase in funding for Ryan White, an 18-percent increase for AIDS research, and a 27-percent increase for prevention.

In addition, the upcoming health care reform plan will make sure that AIDS sufferers are not victimized by unfair insurance policies when they seek treatment for their illnesses. AIDS touches all of us, and no single group should be discriminated against on the basis of this disease.

To make government's role in AIDS more efficient, we're

also taking steps to coordinate AIDS policy. On June 1987, I signed into law the National Institutes of Health Revitalization Act that establishes an AIDS research office to coordinate all the AIDS research at NIH. By now appointing an AIDS policy coordinator, we will ensure that one person in the White House oversees and unifies government-wide AIDS efforts.

Kristine Gebbie will be a full member of the Domestic Policy Council and will work closely with the Department of Health and Human Services. And I'm glad to see Secretary Shalala here today. She has my full support in coordinating policy among all the various Executive Branch departments.

With the dedication and leadership that she has shown and that she will bring to this effort, I believe we will be able to wage the battle against AIDS with complete resolve. I look forward to working with her as we tackle the challenges that are posed to us. I assure you this is another step in the beginning of our effort, not the end of my personal commitment. This will guarantee the kind of focus this effort has long needed.

Ms. Gebbie. (Applause.)

MS. GEBBIE: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Thank you. It's fun to see a lot of familiar faces here this morning.

We've all been working the balancing act of this epidemic for a long time, balancing an investment in research with our investment in applying that research in a sensible way, and our investments in caring for people who already have the disease with an investment in preventing further spread, with an investment in the health-related aspects of this disease, with all of the other pieces -- the education, the business, the community levels of response that have to be a part of it.

My perspective is that for a long time, most of that balancing and coordinating has had to happen at the local level, and people have had to put out far too much energy in every community, pulling programs together and policies together that could be pulled together on a single, nationwide basis, leaving folks free at the local level to really respond to individuals in the way they have to respond, and to apply what we've learned in a way that works in every community in this land. And I'm real thrilled to have a chance to work on that.

I need to say a thank-you to the many, many people -- people with the infection and people caring for people with the infection and people in state and local health departments and national agencies across this country that I've learned from in the last more than a decade working on this disease, and I hope I can put that knowledge into very fast action in this new coordination position.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Let me also say before we take a question or two, to Mr. Speaker and to Congressman Studds and Frank and McDermott and Pelosi and Morella, and to all the other members of the Congress who have been willing to support increased efforts for AIDS in the face of these difficult budgetary times. I'm grateful for them, too, because without the congressional support, we would

not be able to make any progress, in my judgment, even with this heightened administrative effort.

Q Mr. President, as you approach your decision on gays in the military, have you reached a conclusion about the directive that says that homosexuality is incompatible with military service? Have you decided --

THE PRESIDENT: I have not received any such directive. And until I receive a report from the Pentagon, I have no further comment on this.

Q Can I just ask you a broader question, then, about this?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not going to discuss it until I receive the report from the Pentagon. I have nothing else to say now.

Q Mr. President, I have a question for Ms. Gebbie, please. During the time that you served in Washington and Oregon on dealing with the AIDS epidemic, what will you bring to this job that you learned there?

MS. GEBBIE: I think one of the biggest things I learned is that people have to be able to hear each other, not just talk to each other, but hear each other, and then put that listening into effect, developing policies that work. That's a bit of a global answer, but it really has to be applied to each piece of this puzzle. And it's putting a puzzle together that's developing policy around this disease.

Q Mr. President, yesterday when the news broke of the terrorist attempts at bombing various points in New York City, a lot of Americans felt an increased sense of vulnerability. I wonder if you would share with us your thoughts when you learned about it, and do you share that increased sense of vulnerability to terrorism in this country?

THE PRESIDENT: Any free society has always some exposure to terrorism. I think what the American people should do, though, is to feel an enormous sense of pride in the aggressive work done by the New York Police Department and all the federal authorities involved in New York. We are working aggressively on this issue. We will continue to work on it in a very tough way, and we will put whatever resources the United States has to put in to combatting it.

I think one of the problems that has plagued much of the world in the 1980s is random acts of terrorism. And there is always the possibility with increasing political instability in various places of increased terrorism. But I can tell you that I view the action in New York as reassuring. And all I can tell is that we're going to do our best to be as tough, as intolerant, as effective in dealing with these kinds of problems consistently as the local and the federal authorities were in New York.

Q Mr. President, now that the Senate has voted, can you tell us where you come down on the differences between the House and Senate bills in terms of the gasoline versus Btu tax, in terms of the level of Medicare funding, and the other differences in the