

and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 13.

Proclamation 6668—National Day of Prayer, 1994

April 12, 1994

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In a country built by people from hundreds of nations and with as many beliefs, we rely upon our religious liberty in order to preserve the individuality and great diversity that give our Nation its unique richness and strength of character. America's founders saw the urgent need to protect religious freedom and opened debate on the important subject when the Continental Congress gathered in Philadelphia to chart a course for our nascent country. After hearing Massachusetts delegate Samuel Adams' plea, the Congress voted to begin its session with a prayer. When the framers of the Bill of Rights set down our fundamental rights, the free exercise of religion rightfully took its place at the head of our enumerated liberties.

As our Nation has grown and flourished, our Government has welcomed divine guidance in its work, while respecting the rich and varied faiths of all of its citizens. Many of our greatest leaders have asked God's favor in public and private prayer. From patriots and presidents to advocates for justice, our history reflects the strong presence of prayer in American life. Presidents, above all, need the power of prayer, their own and that of all Americans.

We need not shrink as Americans from asking for divine assistance in our continuing efforts to relieve human suffering at home and abroad, to reduce hatred, violence, and abuse, and to restore families across our land. By following our own beliefs while respecting the convictions of others, we can strengthen our people and rebuild our Nation. As Micah reminds us, we must strive "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly" before God.

The Congress, by joint resolution approved April 17, 1952, having recognized the

role of faith and prayer in the lives of the American people throughout our history, has set aside a day each year as a "National Day of Prayer." Since that time, each President has proclaimed an annual National Day of Prayer, resuming the tradition begun by our leaders in the Nation's earliest days. Pursuant to Public Law 100-307 of May 5, 1988, the first Thursday of each May has been set aside as a National Day of Prayer.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 5, 1994, as a National Day of Prayer. I encourage the citizens of this great Nation to gather, each in his or her own manner, to recognize our blessings, acknowledge our wrongs, to remember the needy, to seek guidance for our challenging future, and to give thanks for the abundance we have enjoyed throughout our history.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighteenth.

William J. Clinton

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Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With the American Society of Newspaper Editors

April 13, 1994

The President. Thank you very much, Bill, for the introduction. And thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for the invitation to come by again.

I can't help noting some satisfaction that the president of this organization is not only the editor of the *Oregonian*, which endorsed my candidacy in 1992, the first time it ever endorsed a Democrat for President—I hope they haven't had second thoughts—[laughter]—he also spent the first 8 years of his

life in Arkansas, which didn't seem to do him too much harm.

I am delighted to be here. I want to make a few remarks and then open the floor to questions. We probably have some things in common. Both of us battle from time to time with reporters. [Laughter] And I recently did some light editing on my mother's autobiography, so I appreciate the difficulty of editing things. It was a little easier for me; my mother, when she got very ill, I said, "What are we going to do if you don't finish your book?" She said, "You finish it, don't touch anything I said about you." [Laughter] "Check the facts. Don't let me be too hard on the living." So it was easier for me than it was for you.

But let me say I've been thinking about it a lot lately because it gave me a chance to relive a period in American history that spanned my mother's life as well as my own, starting in the Depression. In many ways, like everybody's family, her life was unique. But it was in many ways like that of so many people who grew up in the Depression and World War II and exemplified and made possible the rise of the American middle class. Most of those people were obsessed with working hard and taking care of their families and building a better future for their children, and they never doubted they could do it. There's a reason, I think, we ought to think about that today, and that is that there are a lot of people who doubt that we can continue to do it. Our mission at this moment in history, I believe, is to ensure the American dream for the next generation, to bring the American people together, to move our country forward, to make sure the middle class grows and survives well into the 21st century.

My mother's generation knew what we are learning, and that is that the preservation of these kinds of dreams is not as simple as just talking about it. She had to leave home after she was widowed to further her education so she could make a good living. And my earliest memory as a child is of my grandmother taking me to see my mother in New Orleans when she was in school and then seeing her cry when I left the train station as a little child.

But our generation is full of parental stories about the sacrifices that were made for

us so that we could do better. And all of us in this room have been exceedingly fortunate in that regard. The generation that our parents were a part of built the houses, the schools, educated the children that built the explosion of American energy and industry after the Second World War.

Underneath the magnificent material mileposts, which left us with only 6 percent of the world's population then and 40 percent of the world's economic output, was a set of values. They believed we had to work hard, that we had a duty to do right by our community and our neighbors, that we were obliged to take responsibility for ourselves and our families. Without those values, the successes would not have occurred, and nothing else passed on to us would amount to much for we would quickly squander whatever material benefits we had.

Most of my mother's generation, at least that I knew, would never have put it this way, but they lived by a creed that I was taught by a professor of Western civilization at Georgetown, who told me that the great secret of Western civilization in general and the United States of America specifically was that always, at every moment in time, a majority of us had believed that the future could be better than the present and that each of us had a personal, moral responsibility to make it so. In pursuit of that dream, the Americans in this century have made a solemn bargain with their Government: Government should work to help those who help themselves.

Forty-nine years ago today, Harry Truman spent his first full day as President of the United States. No one ever did more to honor that solemn bargain. After World War II, our country chose the course of confidence, not cynicism, building a stable world economy in which we could flourish with the Marshall Plan and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which we have just concluded of the Uruguay round.

We lifted a majority of our people into the middle class not by giving them something for nothing but by giving them the opportunity to work hard and succeed. In just 2 months, we'll celebrate the 50th anniversary of the G.I. bill of rights, which helped more than 20 million American veterans to get an

education and millions more to build businesses and homes.

These great achievements did not belong to any particular party. They were American decisions. They were not the reflection of a country pulled to the right or to the left but a country always pushing forward. They reflected the vision and the values of leaders of both parties. After Truman, Eisenhower continued the tradition by building the Interstate Highway System and by investing in the space program and science and technology and in education. The tradition continued in the next administrations, all working toward greater prosperity but rooted in certain values that enabled us to go forward.

But the seeds of our new difficulties, that we face in such stark reality today, were sown beginning three decades ago in changes in our social fabric and two decades ago in changes in our general economic condition. We have seen the weakening slowly of the institutions and the values which built the middle class and the economic underpinnings which made it possible, in theory at least, for all Americans to achieve it.

Three decades ago, in 1960, births outside of marriage were 5.3 percent of total children born. In 1980, the rate had risen to 18.4 percent; in 1990, to 28 percent. There are many of those who say, "Well, Mr. President, you're overstating the case because the birth rate among married couples has dropped so much." It may be. All I know is that those kids are our future, and the trends are inescapable and disturbing. And the rates for teen mothers in poverty and for all mothers without a high school education of out-of-wedlock birth rates are far, far higher than the 28 percent that I just said.

The fear of violent crime has made neighbors seem like strangers. And as Senator Pat Moynihan of New York has said, Americans have begun to "define deviancy down." We're simply getting used to things that we never would have considered acceptable just a few years ago.

In the post-war economy, a high school diploma meant security. By the time of the 1990 census, it was clear that a high school diploma meant you'd probably be in a job where your income would not even keep up

with inflation. Most middle class families have to work longer hours to stay even. The average working family in 1992 was spending more hours on the job than it did in 1969. And in too many neighborhoods, the vacuum that has been created by the absence of work and community and family has been filled by crime and violence and drugs.

In the 1980's, the world continued to change dramatically economically. And I would argue that, in general, our collective response to it was wrong, even though many of our best companies made dramatic productivity gains which are benefiting us today. We reduced taxes for some Americans, mostly the wealthy Americans, and we increased the deficit. But increases in Social Security taxes and State and local taxes put further strains on middle class incomes. From 1981 to 1993, our Nation's debt quadrupled, while job creation and the general living standard of the wage-earning middle class stagnated or declined.

So we have these problems that, let's face it, brought me to the Presidency in 1992, the abject conditions that Americans were groping to come to grips with. You can be proud that so many newspapers have done so much to not only call attention to these problems to make them really real in the lives of people and to cry out for new thinking.

In its remarkable series, "America: What Went Wrong?", the Philadelphia Inquirer showed how the National Government's policies had undermined the middle class already under stress by a global economy. Of all the facts cited by Donald Bartlett and James Steele, one stood out to me. In 1952 it took the average worker a day of work to pay the closing costs on a home in the Philadelphia suburbs. In the 1990's, it took 18 weeks.

The Chicago Tribune on its front page underscored the epidemic of violence killing so many of our children and robbing so many others of their childhood. The Los Angeles Times explored the loss of a sense of community that prompted the riots there 2 years ago. Recently when I was in Detroit for the jobs conference, the papers there talked about the changing job market and the State that was the automobile capital of the world, the good and the bad dislocations that have occurred and what was working.

Recently, in the Pulitzer Prizes, which were awarded yesterday, I noted that Bill Raspberry got a well-deserved Pulitzer for his commentaries on social and political subjects. And Isabel Wilkerson's report on children growing up in the inner city in New York—the New York Times won.

Our administration owes a special debt to Eileen Welsome's series in the Albuquerque Tribune exposing secret governmental radiation experiments conducted decades ago which have consequences today. And I'm proud of the openness that the Secretary of Energy, Hazel O'Leary, has brought to the Energy Department in dealing with this.

There are lots of other things I could mention: The Akron Beacon Journal's examination of race relations there; the Minneapolis Star Tribune's editorial board hosted me the other day, and I had one of the most searching and rewarding discussions of the health care conditions in our country that I have had in a long time.

Every day, you are challenging us to think and to care through your newspapers. My job is to act. As I travel the country, I see that that is basically what people want us to do. Oh, they want us to be careful. They know we live in a cynical age, and they're skeptical that the Government would even mess up a one-car parade. But they want us to act.

The future of our American leadership depends upon what we do at home, but also what we do abroad. Last year among the most important developments were the trade agreements, the NAFTA agreement, the GATT agreement, the historic meeting we had with the leaders of the Asian-Pacific communities. But we have a lot of problems, too. By attempting to come to grips with them in a world increasingly disorderly, we hope to preserve an environment in which America can grow and Americans can flourish, whether it is in addressing North Korea's nuclear program, which protects not only our troops on the Peninsula but ultimately the interests of all Americans, or supporting reforms in the Soviet Union, which helps to destroy missiles once aimed at us and to create new market opportunities for the future, or by harnessing NATO's power and the service of diplomacy in troubled Bosnia, which will help to prevent a wider war and contain

a flood of refugees. Our efforts to stop the shelling of Sarajevo and the attacks on Gorazde, to bring the Serbs back to the negotiating table, to build on the agreement made by the Croats and the Bosnian Muslims, enhanced both Europe's security and our own.

Here at home, for the past 15 months, we have focused on starting the engines of upward mobility to try to make sure we can remember the values of the so-called forgotten middle class with an economic plan that is fair, with cuts that are real, investments that are smart, a declining deficit, and growing jobs.

Last year, our budget cut 340 programs, including most major entitlements. This year, the budget calls for cutting 379 programs, including the outright elimination of a hundred of them. As we cut unneeded programs, we're investing more in education, in medical research, in the technologies of tomorrow that create jobs now, whether in defense conversion or in environmental sciences. We're fighting for a revitalized Clean Water Act, a safe drinking water act, a reformed Superfund program. All of them will clean the environment, but they will also create the jobs of tomorrow, everybody from engineers to pipefitters.

As April 15th approaches, people will see that I did tell the truth last year about our economic program: 1.2 percent of Americans will pay more in income taxes, including me and some others in this room. All that money will go to reduce the deficit. One-sixth of America's workers will get an income tax cut this year because they are working hard and raising children but hovering around the poverty line. And we are attempting to reward work over welfare and to prove that people even in this tough, competitive environment can be successful workers and successful parents. That's why the earned-income tax credit was expanded so much. I believe it was the right thing to do.

The economic plan creates new opportunities to send people to college by lowering the interest rates and broadening the eligibility for college loans and then changing the terms of repayment so that young people can pay them back as a percentage of their earnings regardless of how much they borrow.

There is in this economic plan a new business capital gains tax, rewarding investments for the long term. People who make new investments for 5 years or more will get a 50-percent tax cut in the tax rate and a 70-percent increase in the small business expensing provision—something that's been almost entirely overlooked—which makes 90 percent of the small businesses in the United States of America, those with taxable incomes of under \$100,000, eligible for an income tax cut.

The economy has generated a 20-percent increase in auto sales and 2.5 million new jobs; 90 percent of these new jobs are in the private sector. That's a far higher percentage than the new jobs of the eighties.

The combination of declining deficits, which will amount to 3 years in a row—if this budget is adopted, we'll have 3 years of declining deficits in a row for the first time since Harry Truman was the President of the United States. And it has produced steady growth and low inflation, leading many of our most respected economists, from the Fed Chairman, Alan Greenspan, to Allen Sinai, to say that our economy and its fundamentals has the best prospects it's had in two to three decades. Inflation is projected to be lower this year than last year.

We've come a long way, but there's a long way to go. There's still too many people out of work, too many people working for low wages, too many people who know that they can work harder and harder and harder and they still won't have the opportunity of doing better. And there are too many people who are left out altogether, living in environments that are, at worst, downright dangerous.

Our country is more than an economy; it is a community of shared values, values which have to be strengthened. This year, we are working on things that will both strengthen the economy and strengthen our community. We're working on a welfare system which will continue to reward work and family and encourage people and, in some cases, require people to move from welfare to work through welfare reform.

We are working on lobbying and campaign reforms which, if the Congress will pass them, and I believe they will, will help us to change the culture of Washington in a very

positive way. The national service program this year will have 20,000 young people earning money for their college educations by solving the problems of this country in a grassroots fashion in their communities or in others all across America. And the year after next we'll have 100,000 young people doing that.

The Vice President's reinventing Government program has been a dramatic example of giving us a Government that will work better for less by slashing paperwork and regulations and again, if this budget is adopted—thanks to the work already done by the Congress—will lead us in a 5-year period to a reduction of the Federal Government by 252,000 workers, in a 6-year period by 272,000 workers; so that in the end of 5 years, we will have the smallest Federal Government since the 1960's, the early sixties. I'll tell you what we're going to do with the money in a minute.

But we are moving in the right direction. The health care reform debate is a big part of that. I know there's a lot of good in our health care system. We don't want to mess with it. We want to fix what's wrong. But nobody who has seriously analyzed it can doubt that we have the worst and the most inefficient system of financing health care of any of the advanced countries. No other country spends more than 10 percent of its economy on health care. We spend 14.5 percent of our income. Part of that's because we're more violent; part of it's because we have high rates of AIDS; part of it's for good reasons: We spend more on medical research and technology, and we wish to continue to do that. No one would give up that premium. It's an important part of our world leadership and our global economy. Indeed, we need to find ways to do more in some of these areas, in biotechnology, for example.

But a part of it stems from the fact that we have a system which is plainly inefficient and which, in paperwork burdens alone, may cost as much as a dime on the dollar more than any other system in the world. We are also the only advanced country in the world that has not figured out how to provide health care to all its citizens. Everybody else has figured out how to do it. The result of that is that almost all of you work for compa-

nies that pay too much for your health care, because when people who don't have health insurance get real sick, they tend to get health care when it's too late, too expensive, at the emergency room, and they pass the cost on to the rest of you in higher premiums. If you live in rural areas where the costs can't be passed along, the cost is passed along in another way, in lower quality of health care when the hospital closes or the clinic closes or the last doctor moves away.

Eighty-one million Americans live in families with someone with a preexisting condition, who's been sick before, so that they pay too much for insurance, can't get it, or can never change jobs. This is an important part of rebuilding a faith in the middle class. It's no accident that the First Lady and I have received a million letters that people—telling us their personal stories. They aren't pikers. They're people who have paid their dues, who work hard, who want to make something of themselves in this country. And because of the way we finance health care, they haven't been able to do it.

The education initiatives of our administration are important in this regard. The Goals 2000 bill I just signed for the first time in American history sets national standards of world class excellence in education and encourages schools to use grass roots reforms to achieve them. The student loan reforms will open college education to more young people than ever before.

And finally this year we're going to try to change the unemployment system into a re-employment system. All of you as employers pay unemployment taxes into a system that is fundamentally broken. The average person when laid off was called back after a period to his or her old job when the unemployment system was created. And the unemployment system was just sort of a fair way for the employer to contribute to the maintenance of that person at a lower wage level while on unemployment. But today, most people don't get called back to their old jobs. Instead they have to find new ones. And we should no longer ask people to pay for a system that leaves people idle for a period of months after which they're out of work with no training, no skill, and not a good prospect for the future. So we believe from the day a person

is unemployed, he or she should be involved in a retraining and a new job placement program immediately. It will cut the period of unemployment. It will increase the national income, and it will certainly honor the values of the American middle class if we change this system.

For all of this, there are still a lot of things, maybe the most important things about America, that Government can't do. Nothing has reminded me more of that than the headlines in today's Washington Post. I'm sure you saw the story. Two 10-year-old boys were taken into custody yesterday in an elementary school not far from here, just across the line in Maryland. They were charged with planning to sell crack cocaine found in one of their school bags. Even in this jaded age most everybody, including the school officials at the school, were shocked.

We can do a lot of things to put this country back where it belongs. We can and must pass the crime bill to deal with a lot of these problems. It's a good crime bill: 100,000 more police officers; a ban on 28 kinds of assault weapons; the most innovative prevention programs we have ever supported at the national level to try to keep young kids out of trouble and give them something to say yes to as well as things to say no to; tougher punishment in what I think are sensible ways. And how are we going to pay for it, \$22 billion over 5 years? With a 250,000 reduction in the Federal work force, not with a tax increase.

But even if you do that, we cannot live the lives of children for them. So every one of us, every parent, every teacher, every person, has to somehow find a way to reach these kids before it's too late. Somehow the young people who make it know that they're important. They understand that their lives matter. They understand that there can be a future. They think about the future in terms of what happens 5 or 10 years or 20 years from now instead of what happens 5 or 10 minutes from now. They understand that they have to fight to find ways other than violence to solve their problems or deal with their frustrations. They have to come to understand that children having children is just wrong and can't lead to anything good for them, that drugs will ruin their lives. We've

got a lot of kids now who are beginning to creep back into drug use just because they think it's hopeless out there. We have to change that, and we have to help them change that. And a Government program, alone, cannot do it. We have to do it with the kinds of things you do with these special reportings in your newspaper and galvanizing and organizing people all over this country, community by community.

Finally, let me just say this. A couple of nights ago, we marked the end of the year honoring the 250th birthday of Thomas Jefferson. For you as journalists, of course, his commitment to freedom of expression was his greatest gift to us. I don't know how many journalists I've had quote Jefferson's famous line that if he had to choose a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, he would unhesitatingly choose the latter. My response is always, he said that before he became President. *[Laughter]*

But there's a line, or a lesson, that we often overlook. Jefferson was also a slaveholder, even though he wrote three or four times in various places attempts to limit slavery or do away with it. If you go to the Jefferson Memorial, you find that wonderful quote when he says, "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just and his justice cannot sleep forever." He knew it was wrong, but he couldn't change it.

But Jefferson's great legacy, in some ways, was the advocacy of relentless change. He said that we'd have to change our whole way of doing things once every generation or so. He said the Earth belongs to the living. In other words, the great power of the idea that change and progress is possible if rooted in fixed principles is really the idea we need to bring to American life today.

We all share the responsibility in achieving that kind of change and progress. I think we have got to get together. We've got to go on with the work before us. We cannot afford to be diverted or divided in this town. We cannot afford to ignore the urgent tasks at hand. And we cannot afford to ignore the possibility that we can really make a difference, that we can ensure for the next generation of children the values and the life that were given to us by the generation which

preceded us. And that, I submit to you, is the job of the President and the job of the American people in 1994.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the emcee announced that the President would take questions. The first participant asked if delinquency and crime among children were not symptoms of the disease of adult delinquency.]

The President. Well, in some ways I think it is a symptom. I think it is the outgrowth—if you think about what makes all societies work, basically what makes societies work, what makes them function, what guarantees a healthy environment, it is basically a devotion to the family unit, a devotion to the idea that everybody ought to have some useful work to perform, and an understanding that while the rights of individuals are important, the interests of the community at large are important, too, and that all of us find most personal fulfillment when we live in a community that itself is succeeding. So we have obligations to a larger community. If you go to the places that are in the worst trouble in America today, all three of those things are in deep distress, not very much sense of community, not very much work, and families in ruins.

And what I'm trying to do, sir, is to try to create an environment in which we support family, work, and community, both with incentives for people to do the right thing, like giving a tax break to working people so they won't feel that they'd be better off on welfare—they're hovering at the poverty line—to dealing with the kinds of things that Secretary Cisneros dealt with when he spent the night in the Robert Taylor Homes Project of Chicago the other night, trying to find ways for the people who live in public housing to be secure, to build their own communities, take control of their own destiny, and to be safe from that.

But I agree with you, I think a lot of these problems we identify are the consequences of the fundamental stress on those three things: work, family, and community.

[A participant cited the watchdog role of the press and asked what could be done to open up Government to the people, make Government more accessible to the press in terms

of technology and access to electronic information via the Freedom of Information Act, grant greater access to Presidential materials, and effect changes in Pentagon policy in instances when the press covers military action overseas.]

The President. Well, first of all, I think I mentioned one example in my opening remarks. And that is, I think that the Energy Department is doing quite a good job in dealing with the whole radiation issue. We also have under the review all the sort of, the secrecy rules of Government, and we expect to change them and make available a lot more records than have been available in the past.

You made a specific comment about technology, and whether technology can be used to facilitate this. And we do have a couple of people at the White House—and unfortunately, I'm not one of them—who know a whole lot about this. And we've tried to use things like E-mail more and things like that. But that's one of the things that I've asked our people to study, is how we can use this so-called information superhighway to hook the news media of the country into the Government more for things that are plainly available anyway and whether that could be facilitated. Just the technological transfers, I think, would make a big difference.

On the fourth question, I can't give you a satisfactory answer because I haven't made up my own mind yet, and I don't think I know enough to make a decision, and that is, the relationship of the press to our military operations in time of combat. I'm not rebuffing you, I'm just telling you I have not thought it through, and I don't know what my options are.

But on the other three things, I think we're in accord, and I will try to do a little more work on the whole issue of technology transfer and interconnection. And I think we are moving forward to open more records.

[A participant indicated that the President had advocated Presidential intervention in the strike involving Caterpillar, Inc., and asked if he still believed such action was still appropriate.]

The President. Well, we have worked hard through the executive branch to resolve

other labor disputes, as you know, including the one involving the airlines recently. So I am not averse to that. But if you'll remember, at the time I said that there was an actual strike in place that was of significant duration for a company, Caterpillar, that is very important to this whole country. A lot of you may not know this: Caterpillar has as much as 80 percent of the Japanese market for some of its products. It's a very, very important company.

And so, I guess what I have to tell you is if the strike occurs and if it is of significant duration and if there is something that I think we can do about it, I would be glad to look into that. But what I have tried to do on all labor disputes is not to prematurely intervene—there is no strike at this moment—not to prematurely intervene and to take it on a case by case basis depending on what the national interest is and whether or not there is a positive role we could play. In the case of the airlines, there was; and one or two other cases—a railroad issue, and several others—there has been something we could do. And if it happens, you can be sure that I will look into very closely.

[A participant asked the President to grade the performance of columnists and editorial writers in covering his administration and Whitewater.]

The President. Well, let me first of all say, the grade that they gave me is not as important to me as the grade, sort of objective criteria, that many of the journals here went through: just how much did we get done last year as compared with previous first-year Presidencies. And all the objective analysis concluded that we had the best first year in a generation, in 30 years or more, just in terms of the volume and significance and the difficulty of legislative achievements and advances. So I felt quite good about that, and that's how I measured my own.

Secondly, if I could grade the press, I wouldn't, especially not now. *[Laughter]* But let me just say—let me make three points very quickly about it, either in general or on Whitewater. If you have any doubts about it, then that's good because you ought to be having doubts about things like this. But I want to make three points. One is, you can't

generalize about the press today. You probably never could generalize about the press. But believe me, it is far harder to generalize about it than ever before. There is no way you can do that.

Secondly, I think it is—the press, at least in this town, is very different from most of the press outside this town in terms of how they work and what's important and all of that. But they are under more competitive and other pressures today than ever before. I said last night at the radio and TV correspondents dinner that the Founding Fathers had two points of untrammelled freedom in our set-up. One was given to the Supreme Court and the lower Federal courts; that is, they had lifetime jobs. And they got that because somebody had to make a final decision. They have limited power but ultimate freedom. So they have to be careful not to abuse their freedom. The other was the press, because nobody could think of any practical way to limit the press. And in fact, the limits have become less, not more, with the weakening of the libel laws over time.

And I just think that always, any kind of unrestricted freedom imposes great responsibility on people. And what happens here is, when you've got, for example, you've got all these different new outlets; you've got all these channels; you've got all this time to fill; you have all this competition now from the tabloids; you have the highly politically motivated outlets posing as news media, but not really, trying to affect what the news media do. It is more difficult to be responsible now than ever before. It is a bigger challenge than ever before.

The third thing I would say is, while I am in no position to comment on this, you ought to read what Garrison Keillor said last night at the radio and television correspondents dinner. It was a stunning speech. I have never heard anyone speak that way to a group of media people. He obviously was from the heart, and he said some very thoughtful things. And if you really care about the issue, I would urge you to read what he said. I could not add anything to what he said last night.

Q. That's an A-plus answer.

The President. Thanks.

[A participant asked the President to respond to a veteran who had stated that the way the Veterans Administration runs its hospitals is an example of why the Government should not run the health care system.]

The President. That's why we don't recommend a Government run the health care system. I have two responses to that. First of all, our plan does not provide for Government-run health care. In fact, that's very rare in the world. The British system is the only one where the government actually delivers the health care, just about. There are some other systems, like the Canadian system, where the government finances it all. We have Government-financed health care through the Medicare program. Most people think it's pretty good who are on it. But it's all—you know, if you are on Medicare, you get to choose your own doctor; it's all private care, all private.

The veterans hospital system worked quite well, sir, for a while, but it doesn't work now because the Government can't run it without its being able to compete. I mean, what basically happened is, there are fewer and fewer veterans who choose to use the veterans hospital network. They have other options for pay—they're eligible for Medicare; they have private insurance or whatever. The veterans hospital can't take that kind of pay, so it becomes more underfunded while the population it's treating goes down; and those difficulties feed on itself.

I think we've got a—basically, we have proposed to give the veterans hospital network the chance to compete and do well, but when those veterans hospitals are in trouble, that's why they're in trouble. What I proposed to do instead is to have guaranteed private insurance, and all I want the Government to do is to require guaranteed private insurance for the employed uninsured, give organized approval to give discounts to small businesses so they won't go broke providing the insurance, and then organized buyers co-ops, so small business, farmers, and self-employed people can buy insurance on the same terms that big business employees and Government employees can. And I don't want the Federal Government to do that, I just want it set up so that can be done at the State level.

But I certainly don't think we ought to have a Government-run health care system. I think the Government could create an environment in which everybody can get health insurance; we can bring cost in line with inflation—the right economic incentives for managed care are there—and the little folks have the same chance as the big folks to get affordable care. That's all I want to do.

[A participant asked how he should respond to his daughter's statement, "He sounds just like me when I'm trying to explain why I don't have my homework," after she heard the President's explanation of events that happened 15 years ago.]

The President. Well, let me tell you, let me give you an example. I'll just say one thing. Garrison Keillor said last night, he said, "You know, all I know about Whitewater is what I read in the papers, so I don't understand it." [Laughter] He made two statements; I'm just repeating what he said. He said, "I really wasn't going to talk about Whitewater tonight, but I was afraid if I didn't say anything, you'd think I know something about it." [Laughter] Then he said, "I suppose I ought to tell you that I've never been to Arkansas." But, he said, "I'm reluctant to tell you that, because then you will attack me for not telling you that 30 days ago." [Laughter]

All I can tell you, sir, is I have done my best to answer the questions asked of me. Maybe you have total and complete recollection of every question that might be—not is—might be asked of you at any moment of things that happened to you 12, 13, 14 years ago. Maybe you could give your tax records up for 17 years and, at the moment, answer any question. Or maybe, instead, you want to go back to the homework question: You think I should have shut the whole Federal Government down and done nothing but study these things for the last 2 months?

I would remind you that I was asked early on by the press and the Republicans to have a special counsel look into this on the grounds that then everyone could forget about it, and let the special counsel do his job, and I could go on and be President. I could give all the records up, and then when he had a question in his document search,

he could ask me, we could work it out, and the issue could be resolved. So I said, "Sure," even though the criteria for appointing a special counsel weren't met. No one had accused me of any wrongdoing, certainly nothing connected with my Presidency or my campaign for the Presidency. I said, "Let's do it so I can go back to work." And that is what I have tried to do.

Since then, the same people who asked for the special counsel so that these issues could be resolved in an appropriate and disciplined way and I could go back to work, have decided they were kidding. And they wanted to continue for us to deal with this. Well, I'm sorry, I'm doing the best I can while I do the job I was hired by the American people to do.

I have been as candid and as forthright as possible. Sam Dash, the Watergate special prosecutor, said, "This is a very different administration than previous ones. These people have resisted no subpoenas. They have claimed no executive privilege. They have cooperated. They have turned all the documents over." I have done everything I know to do.

But can I answer every question that anybody might ever ask me about something that happened 10, 15, 17 years ago on the spur of the moment and have total recall of all of that while trying to be President? No, sir, I cannot. But the special counsel has a process for dealing with that which would permit us to focus on the truly relevant questions and deal with it. And I have cooperated very well. I will continue to do that.

I will also do my best to give information to the press. But I would just like to point out that the people who asked for the special counsel asked for it and said, the President ought to do this so we can clear the air and he can go on and be President. Now the suggestion is, the implication of your remark, sir, is that instead of that, I should stop being President and do my homework on this issue.

Q. All I was asking is what I should tell my daughter for her response, and I think the response was wonderful. And I thank you very much for it.

The President. Thank you.

Q. We have time for one more question right here.

Q. Mr. President, I'm Tom Dearmore, retired from the San Francisco Examiner and a native of your home State——

The President. Mountain Home, Arkansas.

Q. ——who used to long ago stir up lots of trouble in Arkansas.

The President. You're still legendary down there, Mr. Dearmore. [*Laughter*]

Q. My father helped run your campaign for Congress 20 years ago——

The President. He sure did. And I'm grateful to him.

[The participant then asked if the President favored the unrestricted use of U.S. money that goes abroad for population control or if he favored any limitation at all on the use of American taxpayers' money for abortion.]

The President. Yes, I do. I do, and let me say first of all, I have asked—I did about 2 days ago—I saw a story on this, and I received a couple of letters about it. And I have asked to see the language that we are advocating and the language that is in the present draft so that I can personally review it.

My position on this, I think, is pretty clear. I think at a minimum that we should not fund abortions when the child is capable of living outside the mother's womb. That's what we permit to be criminalized in America today under Roe against Wade. And secondly, we should not, in any way, shape, or form fund abortions if they are enforced on citizens by the government, if they're against people's will.

There may be other restrictions I would favor, but I can just tell you that on the front end, I think that those are the two places where I would not support our funding going in. And so I think that we ought to be very careful in how we do this.

On the other hand, I don't necessarily think that we ought to write the Hyde Amendment into international law, because there are a lot of countries who have a very different view of this and whose religious traditions threaten it differently.

So I think that there is some room between the original draft and where—it appears, from the news reports, some folks in the State Department may be going to write a

policy that most Americans could support. But I'm glad you brought it up.

I, myself, did not know about this until just a few days ago. And I have asked for a report, and I've asked to see the documents myself so I can get involved in it and at least try to have some influence on what happens. Of course, it's an international conference. We don't know exactly how it will come out in the end, and there will be countries and cultures that have widely clashing views on this.

But, anyway, I've answered you what I think.

Q. Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, thank you very much. We're looking forward to a more informal gathering with you Friday night.

The President. I'm looking forward to it, too. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:31 p.m. at the J.W. Marriott Hotel.

Remarks Honoring the United States Winter Olympic Athletes

April 13, 1994

The President. Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President, the First Lady, thank you for coming out here, in this case not warming up but trying to cool down the crowd—[*laughter*]—while I was trying to get out of the Oval Office; to all of our distinguished guests, and especially to the Olympians.

Let me say, first of all, that the Olympics for me, like most Americans, is primarily a personal experience, not something I experience as President but something—I'm just another American cheering for our teams. I'm proud of the fact that we brought home more medals than any U.S. Winter Olympic team in history. I'm proud of the astonishing achievements of this Paralympic team and the fact that at least two of the athletes won four gold medals.

I was elated and a little resentful, frankly, when my wife and daughter were able to go to Lillehammer, and I couldn't. But you can bet your last nickel that all of us will be in Atlanta—[*applause*]—to our friends from Georgia there.