I want to recognize, if I might, just one of the scholars who's here. We could recognize many. But I wanted to mention one, not because she deserves to be mentioned over the rest of you but because everybody here and everyone within the sound of my voice needs to get the flavor of the extraordinary quality and character of the young men and women we honor today. Jessica Luterman, of Staples High School in Westport, Connecticut, organized a portable art therapy program for geriatric patients called Art On Wheels, which is now permanent. She did this while being an all-State athlete, a member of the All-USA Academic First Team, serving on the boards of her YWCA and the United Way. That's what we need more of in America. Stand up, Jessica. Where are you? Stand up. Give her a hand. [*Applause*]

Like I said, if you all would just remember what got you here today and commit yourselves to trying to communicate that to the rest of this country, our future is in good hands.

Congratulations, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:11 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Barbara Holt, Acting Chair of the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Report on Future Free Trade Area Negotiations

July 1, 1994

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with section 108(b)(4) of the North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Public Law 103–182; 107 Stat. 2067), I transmit herewith the report containing recommendations on future free trade area negotiations.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Daniel Patrick Moynihan, chairman, Senate Committee on Finance, and Sam Gibbons, acting chairman, House Ways and Means Committee. This letter was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

July 2, 1994

Good morning. On Monday, July 4th, we celebrate America's birth. Two hundred-eighteen years ago, our Founding Fathers pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to the untested idea of liberty, equality, and democracy.

Those ideas have survived and thrived because they're at the heart of the only system of government we know that produces wisdom from debate and consensus from division. Indeed right now, we're seeing how our democratic process can produce results that constantly renew the pledges of our Founders, and we're making substantial progress.

I sought the Presidency because our economy was in trouble and because our Government wasn't working. We put in place an economic plan designed to restore the middle class and guarantee growth and jobs by cutting over $250 billion in spending; reducing over 250,000 Government positions; offering tax cuts to 15 million working families, 90 percent of our small businesses, and increases to about 1.5 percent of our people to ask them to help pay down the deficit.

The result has been a remarkable recovery: 3 million jobs, a 1.7 percent drop in unemployment, 3 years of deficit reduction in a row for the first time since Harry Truman was President of the United States. But the agenda for change requires more. It requires us to empower the people of the United States to do well in a world filled with change and competition.

That's at the heart of the crime bill we're about to pass in Congress that will put 100,000 police officers on the street, enact a law that says, "Three strikes and you're out," ban assault weapons that go with the Brady bill, and at the heart of our efforts, to reform the college loan program to make interest rates lower and repayment terms better so that no young person will ever not go to college because of the cost of a college education. We're going to make 20 million young college graduates eligible for these better repayment terms and issue $1 billion of college loans next year under the better terms.

And we're on our way to providing the security of health care to keep all our families whole and give Americans the confidence and security they need to compete and win in a changing world. This is especially important now, when 81 million of us live in families with preexisting conditions, people who could lose their health insurance when they change their jobs. And we know the average American will now change jobs seven or eight times in a lifetime.

The real choices on health care reform facing the Congress are becoming quite clear. For many, many months now, I have been fighting for private insurance coverage—not a Government program—for all Americans, along with provisions to make health care affordable to small business, to farmers, to the families with preexisting conditions. Interest groups and Members of Congress in the other party have criticized my plan, while many of them have said that they, too, are for full coverage for all Americans, but they offer no alternative to guarantee it.

Now, I have been working on our plan to make it even less regulatory and more friendly to small business, to guarantee that no one would lose any benefits because of the plan's requirements.

Finally, after months of criticizing our plan, the Republican leader, Senator Bob Dole, has finally proposed an alternative. Unlike our proposal, his idea of reform is really more politics as usual. It gives a little help to the poor, it's paid for by cuts in Medicare to the elderly, it requires no contribution from the interest groups that are making a great deal of money out of the health care system now and no contribution from those who are not paying anything now into the system, and it gives absolutely no help and security to the middle class, to small businesses and no guarantee of coverage to anyone. Estimates are that more than a million Americans would continue to lose their health insurance every month under this plan, most of them from hard-working, middle class families. It will help you a little bit if you're poor. It won't affect you if you're wealthy. But if you're in the middle, you can still lose your health insurance, and if you don't have it, it won't do much to help you.

One aspect of the Dole plan is particularly disturbing. It was brought home to me this week when small business people from all over America came to the White House and urged us to reject this approach. They don't want any plan that will make it harder to do right by their workers. The Dole alternative leaves small businesses at the mercy of insurance companies who can still charge them more than big businesses or Government. And small businesses that do offer insurance will continue to pay much higher rates, because they'll have to give a free ride to their competitors who don't make any effort at all.

Now, more than 620,000 small businesses have joined together to support the idea that we ought to have full coverage, universal coverage, for all Americans and one that requires the employers and the employees to contribute to that coverage. They know that without guaranteed private insurance for every American, small businesses that do cover their employees will have a harder time competing here at home and across the world.

There's simply too much at stake as we try to prepare our citizens to take advantage of our global opportunities. We can't continue to handicap ourselves in that way. And not only that, it simply won't work. We know from the experience in some States that if you try to reform insurance practices and you don't do anything to help small business and individuals, what will happen is that more and more people will give up their coverage because it will get more and more expensive.

For the last 50 years, our country has come close to health care reform a time or two, but we failed every time. Congressman Sam Gejdenson of Connecticut said this week that during that 50 years, our country has gone from the propeller to the jet airplane, from adding machines to computers, from the radio to virtual reality, but our health care system has actually gone backward in guaranteeing security to middle class families. That's right. In the 1980's, about 87 percent of our people had guaranteed health insurance. Now, only 83 percent of our people are covered.

That's why the vast majority of Americans agree that universal coverage must be our goal. This time we have to move forward.

In health care as in crime and education, our democracy is producing solutions that hold fast to our time-honored values, building on what has always been our greatest strength: people helping one another to take responsibility for themselves and their families, their communities, and their countries.

On July 4th, we'll celebrate with family and friends at picnics and parades. But if you find a quiet moment, I hope you'll reflect on the lessons of our history and make this promise to yourself: to do the best you can to be a good American, to rebuild the safety of our communities, the sanctity of our families, the strength of our schools, the vitality of our economy.

The best way to celebrate our freedoms is by renewing our democracy. We're trying to do that here in Washington by facing up to our responsibilities. I hope you'll urge us to do that as well.

Thanks for listening, and best wishes for a wonderful holiday.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:02 p.m. on July 1 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 2.

Teleconference on Rededication of the Mark Twain Memorial Lighthouse at Hannibal, Missouri

July 2, 1994

Representative Harold Volkmer. Mr. President?

The President. Harold, how are you?

Representative Volkmer. Just fine, Mr. President. Thank you very much.

The President. It's great to hear your voice.

Representative Volkmer. It's great to be here. Can everybody hear me? Can you hear the President?

Okay, Mr. President, we've got a nice crowd here, and we're getting ready to light this lighthouse in memory and to remember Mark Twain, on behalf of Mark Twain, our favorite son.

The President. Let me say, first of all, I'm glad to be back in Hannibal again, at least by telephone. I had a wonderful, wonderful visit there.

Representative Volkmer. Yes, we well remember, and we're almost in the very same spot that you were in at that time, just a little bit up the street, not very far.

The President. Well, I'm a great admirer of Mark Twain, and I read him as a boy and read him as an adult. So I'm very happy to be part of it. And I know that President Roosevelt in 1935 and President Kennedy in 1963 also played a role in this memorial lighthouse. So I'm glad to be a part of that history of your community. And I'm also glad to be back with all the enthusiastic people who live there. I remember them so well, and I want to congratulate you and the citizens of Hannibal and Marion County and also the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for all the work you've done to restore the lighthouse. It really symbolizes the community and your vision and the great history of Mark Twain.

[*Representative Volkmer thanked the President and wished him a happy Fourth of July.*]

The President. I'm really glad to be here. My family and I are up in Camp David, and we're having a wonderful time and looking forward to celebrating our Nation's birthday and watching our soccer team play. But I'm really glad I got to do this. I love Hannibal. I think it's one of the greatest places I've been. And as I said, it's captured my imagination ever since I was a little boy. So I'm delighted to be a part of this.

[*Representative Volkmer invited the President to visit Hannibal, MO.*]

The President. Are you going to light the candle, is that what you're going to do? Everybody going to light a candle?

Representative Volkmer. Well, we're ready. I'd like to—for you to, if you have——

The President. I've got it.

[*Representative Volkmer introduced Karol Mueller, director of the Main Street Program.*]

Karol Mueller. Hello.

The President. Hello, Karol. Congratulations on all the work you've done. You're the director of the Main Street Program, aren't you?

Ms. Mueller. I am——