

Women Office at the Department of Justice and through the Department of Health and Human Services.

Legislation enacted during the past several years is also helping to overcome the scourge of domestic violence. The Violence Against Women Act that I signed into law has given law enforcement critical new tools with which to prosecute and punish criminals who intentionally prey upon women and children. The Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act of 1996, enacted just last month, makes it a Federal crime for any stalker to cross State lines to pursue a victim, whether or not there is a protection order in effect, whether or not an actual act of violence has been committed, and whether or not the stalker is the victim's spouse. And I am pleased that the Congress has just taken action to keep guns out of the hands of people with a history of domestic violence.

My Administration has also worked to increase the support available for battered women and other victims of domestic violence, including the elderly. In February, I announced the creation of a 24-hour, toll-free National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1-800-799-SAFE. The response to this service has been overwhelming, and the hotline has already received over 50,000 calls—the majority from women and men who have never before reached out for assistance. This year, we will also provide increased and unprecedented resources for battered women's shelters, domestic violence prevention efforts, and children's counseling services.

There is still much more to do, however. The welfare reform legislation that I recently signed recognizes the special needs of domestic violence victims, and I urge all States to accept the option of implementing the new law's Family Violence provisions. I have also directed the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice to develop guidance for States and assist them in implementing the provisions. As we help families move from welfare to work, we must ensure that they remain safe from violence in their homes and are given the support they need to achieve independence.

As a result of these and other efforts at the national, State, and local levels, we are one step closer to eliminating domestic vio-

lence and building in its place a brighter, more secure future for our families and loved ones. I salute all those whose efforts are helping us in this endeavor and pay special tribute to the survivors of domestic violence whose courage is an inspiration to us all. I urge all Americans to join me in working toward the day when no person raises a hand in violence against a family member.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 1996 as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by demonstrating their respect and gratitude for all those individuals who unselfishly share their experiences, skills, and talents with those affected by domestic violence.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this third day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

**William J. Clinton**

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 7.

### **Message to the Congress Transmitting Reports on Traffic and Motor Vehicles**

*October 3, 1996*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

I transmit herewith the 1995 calendar year reports as prepared by the Department of Transportation on activities under the Highway Safety Act, the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966, and the Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act of 1972, as amended.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
October 3, 1996.

## Exchange With Reporters in Chautauqua, New York

October 4, 1996

### Middle East Peace Process

**The President.** Good morning, everyone.

**Q.** Is Christopher going to the Middle East this weekend, Mr. President?

**The President.** It's entirely possible. I—we discussed it, and I think he's probably finalized his plans by now. I told him that I wanted him to go there for the beginning of the talks, which start, as you know, on Sunday morning. And he's supposed to go to Africa and I asked him not to cancel the trip to Africa but to go to the Middle East first. So I'm assuming that those plans were made and that he'll be there in the beginning.

### Presidential Debate

**Q.** Mr. President, how's the debate training going, sir? And what makes you think you need much training after all the speeches you make and the news conferences you've been through over the last 4 years?

**The President.** Debates are different, because it's not just answering tough questions. You—basically, there's the person you're debating, the other candidate, plus the interlocutor, plus the time constraints, so that really I'm—Senator Mitchell won last night. [Laughter] I am badly out of shape on this, but I'm trying to get better. And I woke up this morning and sort of massaged my bruises, and I'm ready to go at it again. [Laughter]

**Q.** When Mr. Dole asks you whether you're going to give Whitewater pardons and why your administration has been clouded by ethical problems, what will your response be?

**The President.** Well, tune in tomorrow. I'm going to answer the same thing I have already. There aren't any under consideration, and I haven't given any thought to giving any. That's not the issue. I just said I think that nobody should be singled out for special treatment one way or the other, including discrimination against them or discrimination in favor of them. There's a procedure for that that everyone follows, and there is absolutely no consideration being given to that.

**Q.** Sir, they tell us they are going to——

**Q.** Mr. President, do you expect Senator Dole to go on the attack? Do you expect Senator——

**Q.** ——tell us that they're going to help you, in that sense, control your temper if you should get some of these. Is that a problem for you, do you think?

**The President.** No, but I think—what we do often is I give the answer I'd like to give, and then I go back and give the answer I should give if somebody takes a real broadside at me. [Laughter] No, we're—I think the most important thing is to remember that this debate is as much about the American people and their lives and their future as it is about Senator Dole and me. And so, what I want to be able to do—and my objectives are fairly straightforward and basically quite simple—I want to make sure that the voters know what the record is, they know what the contrasts are between Senator Dole and me, and most important of all, that they know what I intend to do for the next 4 years. And then they can make up their own minds.

I think my goal here is to make sure that the people actually get something out of this debate other than just sort of an exercise in who does a better job in outwitting someone else. That's—I think it ought to be something that's genuinely informative, and I'm going to try to make it that way.

**Press Secretary Mike McCurry.** Thank you, Mr. President.

**Q.** Mr. President, the polls being the way they are, a lot of people are wondering how much importance this debate really is. What do you think?

**The President.** Oh, I think it's quite important. I think the American people care a lot about their country. I think they know we're going through a period of real, profound change, and that these decisions we're going to make in the next couple of years will affect our country well into the 21st century.

**Q.** Do you think you're going to carry western New York, Chautauqua country, if you will?

**The President.** I hope so. I've met some awful nice people here who say they're working for us up here and trying to help us win here. It's unusual, as you know, for a Demo-