

Week Ending Friday, March 27, 1998

**Statement on Andrew F. Brimmer's
Service to the District of Columbia
Financial Control Board**
March 20, 1998

Dr. Andrew Brimmer has contributed his considerable skills, energy, and commitment to the effort to restore the District of Columbia to financial health. Today we can say the District has started down the path toward fiscal discipline and responsibility.

The First Lady and I, along with the entire administration, would like to thank Dr. Brimmer for all he has done on behalf of the District. We are pleased that he has been able to meet his commitment to the administration to serve a 3-year term. His work for the District is the capstone of a long and distinguished career of public service.

We are grateful for Dr. Brimmer's service in this endeavor, which, at times, has been a difficult undertaking. Having worked with him during this period, I personally would like to offer Dr. Brimmer my sincere thanks and appreciation for a job well done.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Statement on the Tornado Disaster
in Georgia**
March 20, 1998

Today I spoke with Governor Zell Miller to express my concern over the tornado that hit Georgia early this morning. Hillary and I are deeply saddened to learn of the individuals who lost their lives in this tragic disaster.

I have asked the Federal Emergency Management Agency to add the counties of Hall, White, Habersham, Dawson, and Rabun as disaster areas to the existing disaster declaration I issued for Georgia on March 11th. This action will allow victims of this tragedy to apply for Federal funds. I have also asked FEMA Director James Lee Witt to lead a

Federal team to Georgia to inspect the damage and report back to me.

Labor Secretary Alexis Herman has approved a grant of up to \$3 million to assist workers who lost jobs. The money will help to create temporary jobs to assist in clean-up, repair, and restoration efforts. In addition, FEMA has begun working on a long-term recovery plan for Georgia.

I want to assure the people of Georgia that this administration is committed to ensuring a speedy recovery from this tornado. Our thoughts and prayers are with those affected by this extraordinary natural disaster.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address
March 21, 1998

Good morning. Today I want to talk about Social Security and how all of us can ensure that one of the greatest achievements of this century continues to serve our people well into the next.

These are good times for America. We have 15 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment in 24 years, the lowest core inflation in 30 years, the highest homeownership in history. Over the past 5 years, we've reduced the size of Government and nearly eliminated the budget deficit—even as we've expanded opportunities for education, strengthened our families, invested in our people.

But this is no time to rest. It's a time to build. Last month I sent to Congress the first balanced budget in a generation. Instead of deficits, America can now look forward to \$1 trillion in surpluses over the next 10 years. But as I said in the State of the Union, we must not spend a penny of this surplus until we have saved Social Security first.

For 60 years, Social Security has meant more than an ID number on a tax form, more

than a monthly check in the mail. It reflects our deepest values, our respect for our parents and our belief that all Americans deserve to retire with dignity.

Social Security has changed the face of America. At the beginning of this century, to be old meant to be poor. As President Roosevelt said, "The aged worn-out worker, after a life of ceaseless effort and useful productivity must look forward in his declining years to a poorhouse." Even in 1959, more than a third of all seniors were poor. But today, thanks to Social Security, that number has dropped to 11 percent. But without Social Security, even in these times of prosperity, half our elderly would live in poverty.

Now, if we don't act, the Social Security Trust Fund will be depleted by the year 2029, and payroll contributions will only cover 75 percent of benefits. We mustn't break the solemn compact between generations. We must be guided by a strong sense of duty to our parents but also to our children. Now, if we act soon and responsibly, we can strengthen Social Security in ways that will not unfairly burden any generation, retirees, the baby boomers, their children or their children's children.

So I challenge my generation to act now, to protect our children and ensure that Social Security will be there for them after a lifetime of hard work. I challenge young people to do their part, to get involved in this national effort to strengthen Social Security for the 21st century.

I'm pleased that so many Americans are already taking steps to meet this challenge. Later today I'll be discussing the future of Social Security with 1,200 Americans in a satellite meeting sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts. And in the coming months, the Vice President and I will attend a series of nonpartisan forums that will help us reach a national consensus on how to go forward. In December I'll convene a White House Conference on Social Security, so that by 1999 we can craft historic, bipartisan legislation to save Social Security for the 21st century.

In the darkest days of the Great Depression, Americans had the courage and the vision to commit to a daring plan whose full impact would not be known for a generation.

Today, in the midst of the best economy in a generation, we must strengthen that commitment, our commitment, for generations yet to come.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Satellite Remarks to The Pew Charitable Trusts' "Americans Discuss Social Security"

March 21, 1998

The President. Thank you. I'd also like to thank Rebecca Rimel. And I'm delighted to join The Pew Charitable Trusts and all of you for this important discussion of Social Security. The Pew Trust has done a great service to the country for making this possible. We have to discuss how we can ensure that one of the greatest achievements of this 20th century continues to serve our people very well into the next.

Before I start, let me tell you about—a little bit about my upcoming visit to Africa, because tomorrow I'm going to embark on the most extensive trip ever taken to that continent by an American President, where I hope to introduce Americans to a new Africa, a place where democracy and free markets are taking hold. I hope all of you will follow my travels closely.

These are good times for America. We have 15 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment in 24 years, the lowest core inflation in 30 years, the highest homeownership in our history. Last month I was pleased to present the first balanced budget in a generation. Indeed, we can now look forward to \$1 trillion of surpluses over the next decade. But I don't believe we should spend a penny of this surplus until we have saved Social Security first for the 21st century.

I am very pleased with the strong support the American people have shown for this meeting and for meeting this challenge. I thank "Americans Discuss Social Security" for leading the way. For 60 years, Social Security has meant more than a monthly check in the mail. It reflects our deepest values, our respect for our parents, our belief that all Americans deserve to retire with dignity.