

we're well over half the way toward our goal of hiring 10,000 by the year 2000.

Fourth, let me say again, I think it's important that we do more to bring the benefits of this economic revival our country is enjoying into isolated urban and rural areas where free enterprise has not yet reached. A lot of the people who are still stuck on welfare are physically separate from the job availability. And I have asked the Congress to approve a second round of empowerment zones, to approve a whole range of initiatives, and Secretary Herman and Secretary Cuomo's budget designed to create jobs principally in the private sector in isolated inner-city and rural neighborhoods. So I hope that will be a part of the work we conclude in the days remaining in this congressional session.

Welfare reform itself was a bipartisan effort. It became an American issue. Now, providing jobs and opportunity and new businesses and new free enterprise in these neighborhoods that still have not felt the economy should also be an American issue.

We have now the lowest unemployment in 28 years, the lowest inflation in 32 years, the highest homeownership in history. Wages are on the rise for our families after 20 years of stagnation. This is our window of maximum opportunity to make sure every poor person in America stuck on welfare has a chance to be a part of America's future and to share in the American dream. If we can't do it now, when our economy and our prospects and our confidence are so strong, then when?

Now we have jobs waiting to be filled in almost every community. I've been working with people here in Washington, DC—there are hundreds of thousands of jobs in information technology-related fields open today, everywhere from Silicon Valley to the suburban areas of the Nation's Capital. If we make the best use of this time, we can change the whole culture of poverty and long neglected neighborhoods. We can help millions more people ensure that their children will be raised in homes full of hope and pride based on dignity and work.

To all of you who have made this day come to pass, who have played a role in the progress of the last 2 years, and to all of you

who are committed to keeping on until the job is done, I extend the thanks of our Nation. Great job. Let's do better.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Vesta Kimble, deputy director, Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services, MD; and Eli Segal, president and chief executive officer, Welfare to Work Partnership.

Statement on the Death of Arthur Barbieri

August 4, 1998

Hillary and I are deeply saddened by the death of Arthur Barbieri. New Haven has lost a great political leader; I have lost a mentor and a friend.

When I was a law student, I was lucky enough to work by Arthur's side and learn grassroots politics at its absolute best. I'm forever grateful for all that he taught me. Our thoughts and prayers are with his loved ones.

Statement on House Action on Credit Union Legislation

August 4, 1998

I am pleased that the House has passed the "Credit Union Membership Access Act" to protect and strengthen credit unions for the 71 million Americans who own, use, and rely upon them. This bill resolves uncertainty about the future of credit unions created by a recent Supreme Court decision by protecting existing credit union members and making it easier for credit unions to expand where appropriate. It also helps put credit unions on sounder footing by making important reforms that could pay enormous dividends in more difficult times. This bill ensures that consumers continue to have a broad array of choices in financial services, and, when Congress sends me this bill, I will sign it.

**Remarks at a Democratic
Congressional Campaign Committee
Dinner**

August 4, 1998

Thank you very much. Maxine, you have neither been a fair-weather nor a faint-hearted friend. [Laughter] And you have always let me know exactly what you think, whether I wanted to hear it or not—[laughter]—in good times and bad. And I thank you.

I thank all of you for coming. Sidney, thank you for being here and for the service you've rendered our country as an Ambassador. I thank the Members of the Democratic congressional caucus who are here: Congressman Ford; Congressman Frost, the head of the DCCC; Congressman Hoyer; Congresswoman Lee; Congressman Rush; and Congressman Lewis, who, like Maxine, started out with me in 1991. And Congressman Stokes, we're going to miss you, and we thank you for your service.

I would like to thank two former members of your group who are here, also my longtime friends, Harold Ford, Sr., and Andrew Young. Thank you both for being here tonight. I also note your high degree of judgment about how the Federal Government works in bringing Secretary Slater. You probably know he got the first budget out this year. He has all the money. [Laughter] He may have the only money in the Federal Government. He's doing a wonderful job, and I thank you for bringing him tonight.

Let me say very briefly, we've already had a chance to visit individually and in groups. More than anything else I would like to thank you. I'd like to thank you for supporting our congressional candidates and the genuine prospect we have to reverse 150-plus years of history in making historic gains in this election. And I would like to thank you for the example you have set for Americans—for all Americans—the work you have done, the barriers you have broken, the hurdles you have overcome, the Americans you have helped, and the reaffirmation you give in your daily lives that the American dream can be made real in the lives of all kinds of people.

I also thank you for the specific ideas you gave me tonight to move forward. I would

just like to make a couple of observations. I'm very grateful to have had the chance to serve as President at a time of remarkable change and to try to make sure that this period of change works for all Americans and that, when we get to the 21st century, the American dream is alive and well for everybody who is responsible enough to work for it, that our country is strong and visionary enough to continue to lead the world toward prosperity and peace and freedom, and that we can do that because we have enough sense to come together, across all the lines that divide us, into one America. That is what I have worked for.

Now, we all know that we are facing a new time of economic challenge because of the difficulties in Asia, which I have spent an enormous amount of time on, as you might imagine—actually since last November. For quite a long while now, we've been working on that, and every day we work on it, because Asia is a big part of our economic growth. Thirty percent of our growth in the last 6 years has come from exports and expanding our position in foreign countries.

But I want to ask you to think about where we go now. The temptation for a great, free country when you have the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years and the lowest crime rate in 25 years and the lowest percentage of people on welfare in 29 years and the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years and the highest homeownership in history, is to say that's pretty good; let's take a break; I've been working myself to death; let's just take a break. [Laughter]

But the truth is, as all of you who deal in international economics know especially, that things are changing so fast, we can't afford to take a break, number one; and number two, we now have the confidence and the resources to deal with the long-term challenges of the country. And I would like to just offer a couple of observations.

We are working with our friends in Asia to try to restore economic growth, and we will do everything we can to help those who are prepared to take the necessary steps to help themselves. But we have to look also at what other opportunities are there to continue to grow the American economy. And