

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

ABC Event

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P R O C E E D I N G S

THE FIRST LADY: Please be seated.

Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House,
and happy Hallowe'en.

Over the last several weeks, I have been thinking a lot about raising children and the obligations that we owe to our own children and other people's children. And I am convinced that there is no more important issue for any of us to be discussing these days. I am actually trying to finish a book about that called "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child," and it really says what I believe.

And increasingly, American business has a very important role to play in the village. And I am pleased today to have the opportunity to recognize and thank the many businesses and municipalities and organizations that are here today for your commitment, not only to your own families, but to the families of the people who work for you, and your communities, by creating family-friendly work places.

I suppose that there are some who still do not believe that we should try to make our work places family

friendly, that somehow that is someone else's responsibility. But I think that any of us who look into the future know that we all have a stake in what happens to all of our children. And part of what this afternoon is doing is recognizing those of you who understand that fundamental principle.

Last year, the Department of Labor asked women what they thought of their jobs. And over 250,000 of them responded. They told the Department of Labor and the President, to whom they actually wrote postcards and letters, in what was called the Working Women Count survey, that they like working. They like contributing to their family's income. They like making a contribution. But that they need to have a more supportive and understanding work place, because we all need help in making sure our work and family obligations are fulfilled.

Just a few minutes ago, I met some of the families that you see here on this stage and in this audience, and I know, as I looked around the table, what it means for the mothers and fathers that I met to feel that their employers appreciate them as full human beings, as participants with obligations to their children.

I met with Dr. Suzanne Sherman, who works for Kodak in Rochester, and relies on their emergency and back up child care for her two sons. Alma Raymond, a single parent in New York City, who would have had to have left her job at the WYCA if it did not have an employee discount on their summer camp. And Susan Cullin and Joel Silverman of Austin, Texas, who know that their children are safe and well cared for at a child care center sponsored by IBM.

The economy has changed, and with it, the stresses on American families have increased. Most families have to have two wage earners, and many families are supported by single parents. Three out of four working women have school-aged children, and it is really hard to keep body and soul together on lots of days, as I can speak from personal experience.

When you're supposed to be somewhere for your job at 9:30, and your daughter's been up all night sick, and it's now 7:30, and your husband's out of town, and she's running a fever, and your baby sitter calls and says, "I'm sick," and describes the same symptoms that you've been up with all night with your daughter, and you don't know what you're going to do -- I've been there, done that, and I

know that trying to figure out how to keep your job and do the best job you can, and to be the very best parent you can -- which is, after all, your most important job -- is not easy.

As a forty-two-year-old factory worker and mother of two said to me recently, "What do you do with your kids when you're assigned the 4:00 p.m. to midnight shift?"

So what we're trying to do is create what we're calling the Working Women Count Honor Roll, and that Honor Roll will honor businesses and local governments and other organizations pledged to make work better and work places friendlier for parents and their families. We know that there are many, many companies of all sizes out there that are already doing what needs to be done, and we hope that by next summer, we will have one thousand pledges from companies that will say they want to be part of this effort.

The changes are happening where it counts: in the work places and neighborhoods and communities around America. The city of Kansas City, Missouri has pledged to grant city employees four hours paid leave annually to participate in their children's activities, and the mayor,

Mayor Cleaver, has challenged area businesses to follow suit.

This is really important. We want parents involved in their children's education, and then we tell them: "You can't go to the parent-teacher conference. You can't go to the school performance. You can't see your child play that sports game that is so important to him." And many parents then feel a sense of powerlessness, and check out. So I know how significant this effort is.

In Texas, the Fort Worth Star Telegram pledges to broaden and formalize family friendly practices, including Flex-Time and telecommuting. It has developed a prenatal maternity care program for the early detection of pregnancy problems, and has set up a private room where employees may nurse their babies.

Now, every reporter here, I hope, will tell their paper, their station, their news service, about what the Fort Worth Star Telegram is doing to make it possible for families to stay together and earn a living.

Now, the Oregon Community Foundation's Oregon Child Development Fund has pledged to raise \$900,000.00 over three years to fund job training for hundreds of

infant-toddler child care providers. This is really important, because too many parents have to leave their -- our children -- in child care centers where the providers there are paid minimum wage, where the turnover is six out of ten workers leaving every single year, where they have very little training, where in most states, you have to do more to get a license to cut hair than take care of children.

So trying to train child care workers is important because actually the facts are that well-trained workers provide higher-quality care, and it is usually not more expensive, but many parents don't know that, and don't know quite what to look for.

Now, as it's Honor Roll pledge, the American Business Collaborative, which we recognize today, will launch a \$100 million initiative to develop and strengthen school age child care and elder care projects in communities across the country. I am so excited about this, because this is the kind of pooling of resources that I would like to see happen with more businesses.

I often visit businesses and they say they can't afford to do it on their own, and I ask if they've talked

to the business down the street, or the business next door, to get together to provide some of these services. And I think this is a really important idea that I would like to see others follow.

I'm also pleased that ABC funds an AmeriCorps program run by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, where AmeriCorps members are helping thousands of families find out where they can access high-quality child care.

So all of these programs that we are honoring today are on the cutting edge of what needs to be done around the country, if we expect to have not only the kind of work force that is loyal, dependable and committed to its work, but if we expect to have our children being given the kind of support they need to develop as they should.

So I hope that we will be able to challenge other businesses to do the same. We need thousands to do so. And I want each of you to know that you really are an example for people all over the country.

And the person who has helped to spearhead this and make it happen is the Secretary of Labor, himself the father of two. The other day, a woman friend of mine was

given an award, and she got up and thanked her husband and said he had two children and he never complained about it. He just did his part. And for those of us who have followed Bob Reich as both a leader and a thinker, one of the most impressive things about him is his fathering, because he is, really a committed Dad.

So please join me in welcoming the Secretary of Labor.

SECRETARY REICH: Thank you so much.

As the First Lady was talking about child care crises, I suddenly flashed upon, in my mind's eye, years back when my wife and I had our first of many child care crises. I was out of town, and Clare --

That's even before I became Secretary of Labor. And Clare was teaching school. She's a -- she was teaching college. And our child care worker at that time was sick. And she -- her class was coming up within ten minutes, and there was no place for our two little boys. So she took Adam and Sam, and she ran into the Dean's Office, and she said, "Here."

And she went off and taught. And the Dean stood there with Adam and Sam, and that was -- he became

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 26, 1995

**REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
AT THE NATIONAL BREAST CANCER COALITION SECOND ANNUAL GALA
NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you all. Thank you so much, Fran. You're right, I was a little put out when you picked my birthday. I grumbled, I complained, but I decided that it was much more important for me to be here with all of you, particularly those of you who are survivors. Because, birthdays are only as important as the quality of life and the opportunities we have to be with people we love and we care about and I'll be home tonight and they'll be there, so I am very honored on behalf of the President and myself to celebrate survival, to celebrate courage, to celebrate perseverance, to celebrate all those virtues and traits that bring so many of you here in this room tonight.

I'm particularly pleased to be with Patricia Duff and Ron Pearlman and salute them for their individual and corporate devotion to this cause and so many others that they have championed. I'm pleased to be with Monty and Suzie Herwitz and to have met their family tonight. I also am always delighted to see Paula Zahn who always does a wonderful job and tonight shared that personal story with us. And I was so pleased to see the three honorees accepting their awards this evening. All of them stand for the hundreds of thousands of women and families who are being honored through them because of their activism and commitment on behalf of the coalition and the cause of eradicating breast cancer.

I don't know that I could ever say quite enough about Fran Visco. She is a fearless advocate. She is someone who believes with every cell of her being that things can be better if enough people banded together to work on behalf of the common good. I happen to believe that also, and felt from the very moment I met her in Williamsburg those three years ago, now, that she was someone with whom I had a great deal in common and I am honored to be anywhere she is.

I also want to acknowledge and thank someone who is here, Dr. Susan Love, who will be speaking to you later. I know that everyone in this room appreciates her pioneering work in breast cancer treatment and prevention. But I hope you also know that she has changed the way medicine treats breast cancer. She has

taught a whole generation of medical students how to take better care of breast cancer patients. And so we owe her so much, not only for the obvious work she does with individual patients, for the extraordinary effort she has made to educate all women about issues effecting our health, but the way she has changed the medical professions attitude about this illness.

The kind of coalition that has been put together that we are honoring here has only been in existence for five years, but it has accomplished so much in a short period of time. It has literally changed and saved lives which is something not many of us can say. It has walked into the midst of grief and tragedy where children have been robbed of their mothers and we as adults have lost our own, where husbands have lost wives, where mothers and fathers have lost daughters. And walking into the midst of that, the coalition in its many forms of all the women and men who support its work, have said you too can be part of this fight. Turn your loss into an energy designed to eradicate breast cancer. Help us change the way we think about this disease. Help us find a cure. Help us prevent it. Hope has often replaced the grief and the tragedy.

I know that when my own mother-in-law went through her four years of struggle with breast cancer. What I admired most about that remarkable woman's courageous efforts, is how she found energy to keep working on behalf of breast cancer prevention and treatment, to travel when she could barely walk to make speeches, to lend her name to fund raising efforts, because she wanted so much to continue every single day to be part of the eventual solution.

We all know the frightening statistics and we all have our personal stories. We know that breast cancer is no respecter of race or ethnicity, it strips all of us down to our basic human essentials. It reminds us that, beneath the differences that we too often use to divide ourselves, one from the other, we really are all the same. We have the same hopes and dreams and aspirations, the same fears and challenges. Breast cancer has been a disease that, for too many years, was not talked about -- left on the back burner of medical research -- and not considered a disease that was as important as some others.

Thankfully, that has changed and we are making progress, but the progress must be continued. In the four short years that the national breast cancer coalition has worked to make government funding for breast cancer research a priority, we have seen an increase in the money allocated from ninety million to six hundred million dollars today. That funding addresses breast cancer on all from; from research into its causes, its genetic roots, its possible environmental connections, to the improvement of mammography, to the development of innovative treatment and prevention strategies.

But you know because you are here, that as with so many other aspects of our life together, government can not fight this disease alone. Private support and funding are critical to keeping both advanced breast cancer research and public outreach efforts on track. Every dollar donated to breast cancer research prevention and treatment brings us years closer to the final eradication of this disease.

By your grass-roots activism, your outspokenness, your persistent lobbying, you have raised awareness about this disease and you have frightened a lot of officials into doing exactly what they should have done anyway. I hope that you appreciate the importance that this coalition has played, because even if you have a very supportive President, as you do, someone who is committed both because of his head and his heart, it is still difficult unless there is a network of activists who are constantly keeping watch to know exactly what is going on, even in the government.

As Fran mentioned, there was a moment a few months ago when it appeared that because of budget cuts and the like, that the money that had been fought so hard for in the Defense Department would be lost because it was not considered essential to our national security. The President was able to step in and put a stop to that because he had made it a priority. But it's that kind of constant vigilance that is required.

We are moving forward on the National Action Plan on Breast Cancer and it's very important that this plan stay on track as well. It has been formulated by consumers, clinicians, scientists, government officials, and other experts. It is a part now of the government, it is being implemented through the public health services office on women's health, whose director, Dr. Susan Blumenthal is here with us tonight and whom I would like to thank for her constant and vigilant watch over what happens with this plan. But each of us who care about what happens to our friends, our family members, ourselves must remain vigilant.

If I have any message this evening, in addition to congratulating all of you and thanking you for your efforts, it would be to please ask you to give as much attention and energy as you can in the coming weeks and months. To being sure that the gains that have been made on behalf of breast cancer and medical research, prevention, and treatment will continue.

I am worried about the cutbacks in medicare and what that will mean in the decrease in the accessibility of older women to mammograms and to clinical visits. I am worried about the cutbacks in Medicaid and what that will mean to poor women who will not have access. I have met too many women, who, as Fran said, are cut out of our existing health care system. I've had

women tell me that at their annual check-up, which they paid for out of their own pocket because they had no insurance, their doctor found a lump, referred them to a surgeon, where they were told that because they didn't have insurance, it should just be watched for a while.

I've been at breast cancer awareness meetings like the one I attended in San Diego, where I was trying to encourage older women on Medicare to take advantage of the medicare benefits to have mammograms, when a woman stood up in the back of the room and said: I'm only sixty, I don't qualify for medicare, I still work, I have no insurance, I have a lump, what can I do? So I worry about whether we will be taking one step forward with respect to the prevention and research and two steps back with respect to affordability and access for women.

We all have to be vigilant, because as we continue this fight against breast cancer, we know that there will be many competing considerations. There will be other diseases, there will be other needs that people have, and as we watch the budget battles that are going to be engaging the Capitol and Washington, and the capitols around the country, we have to be sure that women's health and diseases like breast cancer are not once again relegated to the back of the concerns where, for too long, they were.

I also want to say that I am particularly worried about the impact on women in minority communities who are already less likely to seek treatment, less likely to be able to afford it, and I was pleased to see the honorees this evening who, in their own way are working to reach out to women across the board in every community. But we have to speak out, about what budget cuts and budget priorities mean in real people's lives. Behind the statistics and all the numbers, are women, women who need treatment, women who need care, women who need the kind of work that you are doing so that the disease can be prevented.

This is not a faceless disease, nor is it just a woman's disease, it is a family disease, and it's a national epidemic. The President and I will continue to do everything we can to assist the coalition in its endeavors. And I look forward to the day, very honestly, when the coalition will be disbanded because we will have a huge gathering in a much larger room where we will have Billy Joel be the warm-up act for an announcement that breast cancer, like polio, is through.

That's what we are working for. Thank you for what you are doing to make that day possible.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 3, 1995

REMARKS BY FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR "KEEP PATIENTS FIRST" RALLY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much. I want to thank the sponsors for organizing this event and all of you for the work you do. You provide the highest quality health care in the world. You represent the most vulnerable of all Americans -- the people who too often are left out and forgotten. You are here being their arms, their legs, their eyes, their ears, because you like me, are very concerned about the proposed Republican budget cuts -- that has stripped more than \$440 billion dollars for Medicaid and Medicare.

This debate, no matter what you hear, is not about balancing the budget. The President has said for a long time -- yes we do need to balance the budget so we can lift the burden of debt off our children and strengthen our economy. In fact, the Democratic members of Congress you see on this stage, and this President have already begun to do that.

For the first time since Harry Truman was President, the budget has been cut three years in a row. We do not have to argue about balancing the budget, it is moving towards balance.

The real issue is -- will we balance the budget by making health care unaffordable for Medicare beneficiaries?

Will we forget that three out of all of the people on Medicare earn less than \$25,000 a year?

We do not have to cut Medicare and raise costs to beneficiaries to balance the budget.

We do not have to cut Medicare spending in New York alone by over \$18 billion.

We do not have to cut Medicaid spending by over \$21 billion.

We do not have to force states to cut coverage under Medicaid for over 8 million children, older Americans and people with disabilities.

This is not just about balancing the budget. It is not just about billions of dollars. It is not just about what we will do to our hospitals here in New York, to medical schools, to the people who take care of the sick and the ill and the dying. It is even more important than all of those significant issues. This debate is about what kind of country we are, what kind of people we are, and what values we still do have.

There are many people who claim to promote family values, but then propose policies that do not value families. We need to stand up for the value of all Americans. We need to be sure that when we go into the budget debate of the weeks ahead, that there will be people who make it very clear that we will stand up for those who do not have a voice or a vote in Washington. Who do not have a lobbyist or a special interest representing them.

And I would like to say a special word about what will happen to children. Eleanor and others have talked eloquently about their families and what the cuts in Medicare will be in older Americans.

Will the cuts in Medicare also affect younger Americans to? Because families trying to raise children will find that they can not afford to do for their children what they want to do, because of the cuts in Medicare.

The Republican budget is an attack on children -- and we are not talking only about poor children -- we are talking about all children. The budget cuts that the Republicans propose will deny millions of children basic health care, schooling opportunities, proper food, a safe place to live -- even the clean air and water they need, and the food that they expect them to have to grow to be healthy.

Just last week when I was at Babies and Children's Hospital I talked with parents who were there because their children were sick. And the children were so sick, that even for families that made a good living they could not afford the medical expenses, and so their children were on Medicaid.

I was very struck by how those parents had given up everything to take care of their children. They knew there is nothing more important in their lives than taking care of children. Why would we as a country begin to deny the most basic and fundamental obligations we have to care for our children -- and that is exactly what this Republican budget does.

Let me just give you a few examples: the Republican budget would eliminate Head Start -- the program that helps young children get ready to learn for 180,000 children. And the cut in nutrition assistance for 14 million children, and reduce funding

to keep our drinking water clean. It would do away with national service, the program known as Americorps.

But what in particular proves that we have to stand up and speak against, is what the Republican budget proposal would do to health care. They are dismantling the social safety net known as Medicaid. The primary source of health coverage for one out of four children in America.

Medicaid pays for the coverage for millions of children who are disabled, and who suffer from chronic illness. It is the primary source of health coverage for nine out of ten children with HIV and AIDS. Medicaid is the primary source of pre-natal and maternal health care for low income pregnant women. And Medicaid is also an important source of funding for long term care for older Americans. Over two thirds of all nursing home residents are there because of Medicaid support.

Medicaid is not for somebody else, Medicaid is for all of us -- it is there in case we need it, it's there so if Americans need it, it's there if your child needs it.

If the Republican budget cuts went through they would eliminate health care coverage through Medicaid for half a million children in New York alone.

I have to ask, as I ask myself, I have to ask all of you. Do you think it is the American way to deny infants the preventive health care they need to stay healthy? I don't think so.

I don't think it is the American way to deny treatment to children who are disabled or desperately ill, or to punish hard working parents whose family health care coverage vanishes with a job loss, or a job change. It is certainly not the American way that I know, to make the oldest among us give up their possessions, sell their house, sell their car, live in poverty if a spouse has to go into a nursing home.

The America I grew up in, the America I want my daughter to grow up in, is better than that.

And every time, every time, I look out to a crowd like this I think of all the stories that appear, all the people who have worked so hard and given so much, who have tried to keep their body and soul and their families together. I do think of us as a great extended American family, whose top priority has always been our children.

Now, whenever I make a speech like this, somebody invariably either writes or says, "Well, you can't expect the government to take care of children -- that is the family's responsibility."

Well who argues with that? Of course it's the parents primary responsibility.

But let's not fool ourselves. National policies, whether they are about education or health care or taxes or the environment, affect every family and child. This debate is not about some abstract government program. This debate is about whether or not we will take care of our children. And I would like to ask all of the policy makers in Washington to start thinking about these issues -- not as Republicans or Democrats, not as partisans, but as parents. As parents we know what our children need and who do everything we can to meet those needs.

We know if all our children are healthy, we feel better, but if one of them gets sick we will do everything to take care of that sick child. But when it comes to legislating for other people, parents can turn into partisans, and parental instincts disappear.

Let's start considering ourselves when it comes to our children, that each of us has an obligation to take care of the children around us. Think about it as parents.

Think about it as the children of parents who might need medical care or health care in the future.

Now we already know that the budget that the Republicans have passed are dead on arrival when they arrive in the Oval office. We already know that the President will veto those budgets. But after those vetoes are signed, the hard work will begin. Which is why we need all your voices -- not just for a parade and at a rally -- but in the days and weeks ahead, we need your voices to speak out.

We need you to write letters.

We need you to attend meetings and rallies.

We need you to talk to your friends and neighbors.

We need you to call radio talk shows.

We need your voices heard, so that everyone in Washington has the chance to put aside partisan political agendas and to think like parents, to think like family members, to think like citizens who care about each other and have obligations towards one another. That's the America that I know is waiting there for us, that's the America that we have to fight for -- it is the American way to stand up for each other -- that's what your duty is today. Thank you for being here, but stay in this debate.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 23, 1995

REMARKS BY FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
AT BABIES AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
AT THE COLUMBIA-PRESBYTERIAN MEDICAL CENTER
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much. Thank you for those flowers, too. Thank you.

I am very pleased to be here and to have an opportunity to discuss the health and well-being of America's children at one of America's foremost hospitals for children. I learned just a little while ago from Dr. Speck that Columbia-Presbyterian is the oldest and the largest not-for-profit hospital center in the United States.

But certainly those of us who care about high-quality health care in America or anywhere, and those of us who care about children, know of its importance in delivering the kind of excellent health care that we have come to expect in the United States. And that's what I want to talk to you about today because I have been fortunate in my life to be involved with children's hospitals and to visit many of our children's hospitals around the country.

From my experience as a parent and as a board member of a children's hospital, I know there is something very special about these places. Mrs. Wray was describing her own personal experience and I had the privilege of speaking with a number of other parents and children about their own experiences here.

I am here today because I am worried about the future of hospitals like this one. And more generally, I am worried about the future of America's children.

Decisions are being made in Congress at this very moment that threaten to devalue and demean every aspect of our children's lives -- their health, their education, their nutrition, their housing, their safety, and the environment in which they grow up.

The facts are simple and they are stark. Children are the biggest losers in the Republican budget proposal.

Today the Clinton Administration is releasing a detailed analysis of the impact of these proposed cuts on our children. And this analysis -- which goes state by state, looking at what will be the impact on children if these proposals actually become law -- is shocking reading.

We know that any mother or father or aunt or uncle or grandparent or concerned adult would not take comfort in knowing that for all the rhetoric we hear, often coming out of the United States Congress about helping children, the Republican budget will in fact deny millions of children the basics they need to live productive lives.

They will be denied health care they now have, schooling they can count on, proper food, a safe place to live, a secure neighborhood, air and water that we can count on as being clean enough to breathe and drink.

We are not talking about only poor children. I wish that -- if that's all we were talking about -- there would be an uproar and an outcry from every person in our country, that we should not do to the most vulnerable children among us what we would not let anyone do to our own children.

But these budget cuts go much further. These budget cuts -- in the way they undermine health and food safety; the way they strip away environmental protections; the way they put at risk many of the services that all Americans and their children count on -- is an assault on every child's future -- my child, as well as any child in this room, or living within a few blocks of this hospital.

We also know that families making less than \$30,000 a year -- which are about half the taxpayers in the United States -- under the Republican budget proposals will actually see their taxes go up, so that people who make more money than that can see their taxes go down.

So it is not merely that we will be undermining the services available to all children, that we will be particularly assaulting the services needed for poor children, but under these Republican proposals, we will be taking money away from families who earn less than \$30,000 a year so that they will be further handicapped in taking care of their own children.

Now I can only believe that most Americans have not yet fully grasped the impact of these budget proposals, because we are all for balancing the budget. It was this President and Democratic Congressmembers, like Carolyn Maloney and Charles Rangel, who are here, who voted for the first time in 1993 to actually begin balancing the budget after 12 years of profligate spending that drove the deficit through the ceiling.

So there's no debate about balancing the budget. There is also no debate about being more efficient in providing services. It was again, this President and the Democratic Congress that began the process of making government more efficient.

We don't have any objection to sensible, reasonable proposals that will put our economic house in order.

But we will not stand by silently and see those who are most vulnerable among us -- those who work hard for a living, those who make less than \$30,000 a year -- pay the price for the profligate spending that went on during the 1980s in order to profit those who do not need that kind of help.

If one looks in the faces of our children, one can see the hope for the future, but we know the struggles that they are up against. We know that consistently, too many of the children in the richest nation in our hemisphere, in our world, live in poverty.

I just returned from a trip to South America. I visited many nations, much poorer and less developed than ours. Yet I talked with leaders who were doing all they could to increase spending for education, increase spending for health care -- looking for ways to invest in their children, at the very time when the United States Congress is looking to reverse our own historic commitment to the children of America.

Our nation has survived as the longest living democracy because of our historic commitment to children and families. Now is no time to step backwards and that is exactly what this Republican budget analyzed here would have us do.

Let me give you just a few examples. The Republican budget would eliminate Headstart for 180,000 American preschoolers. It would deny tens of thousands of children right here in New York the opportunity to have the kind of personal attention in school to acquire the skills that they need.

It would eliminate Goals 2000 which sets standards for teaching and learning in America.

It would eliminate summer jobs for 600,000 young people and do away with the President's national service program known as Americorps in which young men and women earn their way to college by performing community service.

We can look across the board at this budget and see that no part of our life together as a nation would be left untouched and damaged.

I want to talk though, just for a minute, about health care

because here particularly, the Republican budget cuts are cruel and unconscionable. And I can only hope that the people who are voting to put them into place do not understand the consequences of their votes.

We are seeing the dismantling of the part of the social safety net known as Medicaid. It has been dismantled in these proposals with very little discussion, except with those who think they might profit from the dismantling.

We know when we look at what Medicaid has done, that it is the primary source of health care for nearly one in four American children. The next time you see a group of children anywhere, just mentally count off, because one in four in some way -- middle class, upper class, poor -- depend on Medicaid.

And one in three children under the age of three depend on Medicaid.

More than half of the children on Medicaid live in families with working parents -- parents who are doing the best they can to earn their own livings, but cannot meet the medical needs of their children.

Medicaid is the primary source of health coverage for millions of children who are disabled or who suffer from chronic illness.

It is the primary health care coverage for nine out of 10 children with HIV and AIDS.

Medicaid is the primary source of prenatal and maternal health care for low-income, pregnant women.

Medicaid is also an important source of coverage for the health care of older Americans living in extreme poverty or with serious disabilities and is the largest insurer for over two-thirds of nursing home residents.

Medicaid is literally a lifeline for many, many millions of Americans.

The Republican budget cuts would eliminate health care coverage through Medicaid for nearly one-half million children in New York alone, and four and half million nationwide by the year 2002.

That means those children would no longer be able to get immunizations or check-ups or other preventive services now covered by Medicaid. It means that they would use the emergency room as so many uninsured families who make just a little too much money in order to qualify for Medicaid do for their health

care coverage now.

Ripping apart this safety net is not the American way.

It is not the American way to deny infants the shots they need to stay healthy.

It is not the American way to deny treatment to children who are disabled or desperately ill.

It is not the American way to punish hardworking parents whose family health care coverage vanishes with a job loss or a job change.

It is not the American way to make the oldest among us give up their possessions, sell their house, sell their car, and live a life of poverty if their spouse has to go into a nursing home.

Cutting \$182 billion from Medicaid will force families to make grim choices that you or I would not wish to make and no American family should be forced to make. Choices between health care for children or nursing home care for parents. Choices between education and vaccinations; between food and prescription drugs.

The people at this hospital know that the choices that will be forced on American families will also be forced on our hospitals -- private, not-for-profit hospitals like this one and public hospitals throughout our country.

These are the institutions that take all of our children, regardless of their income, regardless of where they come from. These doors are open. However, the doors of many of the for-profit hospitals in America are closing and the doors of the not-for-profit, community hospitals will be likely closed permanently if the combined cuts in Medicaid and Medicare go through.

For the children of America that need help, they know they can find it at children's hospitals. These hospitals cost more because taking care of sick children is more expensive than taking care of sick adults. And children's hospitals cannot shift those higher costs to adult patients the way other hospitals can. Already Medicaid pays children's hospitals, on average, less than 80 cents for every dollar spent to care for a child.

The impact of cutting Medicaid even further is obvious. Children's hospitals simply will not be able to provide the services they do today and will not be able to maintain their open-door policy.

Throughout our history, we have thought of ourselves as an

American family whose greatest priority was our children. And as Americans, we have prided ourselves on our compassion. And I think that is a pride that was well earned because we have put our children first, both in our public investments and our private ones.

We have built magnificent hospitals like this, we have provided the basis for medical research that cannot be matched anywhere in the world. We have taken care of our poor.

Anyone who, like me, has traveled in countries struggling because of their economic problems to take care of the health care needs of their people, know that when one walks through a hospital in Brazil or Bangladesh or Moscow as I have, you see literally hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people with nowhere else to go, with doctors struggling to provide even the most basic kind of health care.

I do not want to see that in the United States of America. There is no reason we should.

Now, any time I make a speech like this, somebody invariably either writes or says, "Well you know, you can't expect the government to take care of children -- that is the family's responsibility." Who argues with that? Of course it is the family's responsibility. Of course parents bear the primary responsibility for their children.

But let's not fool ourselves. National policies -- whether they are about education or health care or welfare or taxes or the environment -- affect every family and child. They are mirrored in the lives and experiences of our children. And government has played and must continue to play an invaluable role in safeguarding the interests of children and families.

It does so in ways that we don't often think about. When I was speaking with the parents and children a few minutes ago, I met two families with adopted children with serious health problems. They were able in part to adopt those children and give them the love we would want for every child because Medicaid helped to pay the health care costs of these special needs children.

We don't think about how the actions that are being proposed today will push more and more families closer to the brink of economic disaster.

And that is what I want every American to start considering. Think about this budget debate -- not as a Republican or an Independent or a Democrat -- think about it as a parent, as a grandparent, as an aunt, as an uncle.

Don't get so wrapped up in the statistics and the policy papers that we forget our basic obligations. We know as parents what we owe our children. We know what we try to do in order to meet those needs.

I looked into the faces just a few minutes ago of mothers and fathers who have given up everything to take care of sick children -- and who among us would not do the same?

But when it comes to legislating and making policy, parents turn into partisans and good parental instincts seem to retreat. Would we ever say as parents that only one of four of our children could go to a doctor or get a vaccination or have a hearing test? Of course not. We would demand and work for the right to make sure they were all taken care of.

Would we ever say as parents with a child that had spinal bifida or congenital heart disease or cystic fibrosis that they no longer deserved treatment and care? Of course not. We would do everything within our power to make sure our child was taken care of.

But in this time we live in today, with the kind of reckless, ideological effort to meet fixed budget targets to prove a point, we are undermining what parents try to do every single day.

We as a society are doing things we would never do as parents. How can we legislate what we would not approve of as parents? How can we vote for people who would do that? How can we permit it to happen?

I hope that as this debate goes on we will recognize, first of all, that the kind of cuts that are in this Republican budget proposal cannot be permitted to be enacted in to law.

There is an alternative: a balanced budget proposal that the President has put forth that truly does put children's needs first. It doesn't give tax cuts to the wealthiest of Americans, and for those in this atrium who would lose their tax cut, I apologize. But you don't need it. Our children need that funding in order to keep their lives going.

And more than that, these budget battles are not just about money, they are not just about who wins and who loses in Washington, they are about our values as a nation. What do we really care about? What kind of people are we, what kind of people do we intend to be?

Any family does its best to take care of its old and its young. There is an inner-generational compact that is more important than any kind of contract for legislation.

That compact says loud and clearly: "We owe each other something. We have obligations to one another and besides, we never know what might happen to us."

There, but for the grace of God, go our child, our spouse, our parent -- and we ought to be a little more humble in the face in the unpredictability that life deals all of us.

Our children are our present and our future, a test of our humanity and our faith. And our children are watching. Will we pass this test or will we fail them and ourselves?

When I was in Chile, I was reminded of their Nobel Prize-winning poet, Gabriela Mistral who said these words, that I think we ought to say to ourselves over and over again in the weeks and months ahead: "Many things we need can wait. The child cannot. Now is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being made, his mind is being developed. To him, we cannot say tomorrow. His name is today."

And today each of us has an obligation to the children we know, the children around us, and the children of this country, and we will be judged on whether or not we meet those obligations.

I think we will, because when it finally comes time to make the decision, I do not believe a majority in Congress or a majority in the United States will turn their backs on our children.

Thank you all very much.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 26, 1995

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
AT PBS PANEL DISCUSSION
THE WHITE HOUSE

MRS. CLINTON: Good morning. And welcome, everyone, to the White House for this very important meeting. I am delighted that you could all be with us, and I want particularly to recognize a few people who were able to join us this morning. We have Representative Jim Moran from across the river in Virginia, and Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton from here in the District of Columbia.

We are also delighted that Richard Carlson, the President of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; Ervin Duggan, the President of the Public Broadcasting Service; Delano Lewis, the President of National Public Radio; and Larry Irving, the Secretary for Communications in the Department of Commerce are also all here with us.

This is a meeting about a very important subject. It is about the role that television plays in the lives of our children and, particularly, the role of public broadcasting. I think that it is very important in our country today to acknowledge and admit that television is a pervasive influence in our lives and has a particularly significant impact on the development of our children.

There are some who have engaged in a long discussion -- even an argument -- over the last decades about what television means in our lives, what the role of violence, for example, in television is. But I would like to focus today on an issue that we are now finding more about, and that I hope will influence the debate about the role of public broadcasting and its contribution to children's development as we struggle with and argue over the proper role of government.

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Public broadcasting is for many, many children the only channel available that has consistently effective educational programming. Probably about 40 percent of our families in America do not have access to cable television. And because of the demographics and incomes of those 40 percent of our families, we know that they have a disproportionate number of our children. More than 40 percent of our children reside in those 40 percent of our families.

If you were to look, as I have done, at the daily television schedule of our three major networks and our public broadcasting channel, you would see what is available for those children in those homes. Now, certainly, there are other options on cable, but they are often far outnumbered by channels that provide information and programming that is not always suitable for our children.

But looking only at the four available channels that those 40 percent of our families have access to, it is clear that what is available to children with respect to their educational and developmental needs is not usually found on commercial television. It is found during the day on public broadcasting.

And there are those who think that the educational programming of public broadcasting is a luxury. But to them I would ask: What is the necessity that can be substituted for that luxury? Where are the outlets for the kind of helpful, productive, learning opportunities that children have access to on public broadcasting day in and day out?

But you don't have to take my word for it. You don't have to take anybody's word for it. We actually have research. We have evidence about the impact of television and the impact, in particular, of public broadcasting.

One of my great hopes from a meeting such as this is that our decision makers will not just engage in ideological discussions, but will make decisions based on the evidence that we have available to us. If one disagrees with the evidence -- fine. Provide counterevidence. But it is difficult to engage in a conversation about what is in the best interests of our children if the people engaging in it are merely taking ideological positions.

And so, today, I have asked some people who have a great deal of experience and knowledge about the impact of television and, particularly, the impact of public broadcasting on children, and

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especially on low-income children who often do not have the educational opportunities, the intellectual stimulation, the academic preparation that many of us try to provide for our own children.

I am sure anyone who has followed our national discussion about television knows of the woman I am about to introduce. She is someone who, for many years, has been, in effect, sounding the alarm about the impact of television. I wish that alarm were heard in every family more loudly than it sometimes is, as well as in the board rooms and legislative chambers of our country because she has pointed out, time and time again, that children are shaped by what they see, by what they hear, by what they are taught.

And the constant, pervasive presence of television in most of our homes is a challenge for parents who will have to learn and be willing to accept responsibility for monitoring more closely the television-watching of their children. But it is also a challenge for the larger society.

And so it gives me great pleasure to introduce Peggy Charren. She is the founder of Action for Children's Television and is currently serving as a visiting scholar at Harvard, continuing to examine and accumulate and analyze evidence about the impact of television on our children's lives.

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MS. CHARREN: There's time for a few questions, and I though that, given that we have the First Lady with us, we would let the First Lady ask the questions today instead of the audience.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, the one thought that kept running through my mind after what we've heard is, can you imagine any child rushing home from the first day of school and trying to tell the Power Rangers that she'd gone to school? (Laughter and applause.) You know, there's just sort of a disconnect there.

Well, I really find everything that each of you has said to be born out in our common experience. Really, it is common sense. But let's see if we can maybe take it one step further for people who are still saying to themselves, well, if this is so important, commercial television will pick up the slack; if this is so significant in the lives of our children, there will be a market for it, so all of what you are saying can be understood and accepted, but

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doesn't necessarily lead to the conclusion that you have to have a public television presence with designated programming for children in order to make the point that each of you has supported.

So let me ask both Peggy and John and then everyone else to comment. Why isn't it likely that if the worst were to happen, and the programming that we've already talked about and the significance of it that the research has demonstrated were to disappear, that that vacuum wouldn't be filled by the existing marketplace?

MS. CHARREN: I think that if there's anything that my 27 years of activism on behalf of choices for children on television has proved, it is that even with a lot of conferences, even with articles in the paper, even with the people who make that kind of television having children, they will not provide the kind of programming that children need that really enhances education. They are more comfortable with the other kind of programming.

And the problem is that when you talk to 2- to 15-year-olds in a voice that you want to tell them something important, you speak in a different language to preschoolers, to elementary-age kids and to older kids. And if you want to get the most eyeballs watching the commercials, you tend to say things that all children will listen to. And maybe all children do read comic books at one point. But when you talk to them about how wonderful literature is, you do it the way the book business does. And Public Broadcasting handles that screen the way the book business handles children's books.

MR. WRIGHT: I think the most important thing to think about with respect to the private sector is not that it's unwise, not that it's entirely vicious, not that it's a handicapping condition to the entertainment and education of children, but that they are focused entirely on the bottom line. They exploit children. They gather eyeballs glued to TV sets which they then sell to ad agencies and advertisers who then re-exploit the children to sell them products they don't need, food that's not good for them, and toys that enhance their fantasy and their willingness to attend the programs which gather their eyeballs for sale. I think I'll stop on that line. (Laughter.)

But the research that they do -- I spoke to the executive producer of Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, and I asked her, what kind of research do you do? How do you know what messages you are getting across to children? And she said to me -- and this is a

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quote -- "After every rap we sit around and we ask each other, what questions have we answered; what ideas would children take away from this episode that we have just made?" And in the research community -- this was at a Children Now conference and some of you were there -- in fact, you were there by television -- everybody said, you asked who? They said, we asked ourselves.

Until we start asking the children, until we start doing the research, something other than market research, until we leave a program like "My So-Called Life," -- one of the few decent programs for young people that the commercial ever made that was cancelled. Not enough eyeballs to sell. Not a wide enough range of children watching it. And every network has done that. I can remember "Hot Hero Sandwich" on NBC -- a wonderful, wonderful program. What happened to "Big Blue Marble" on ABC? And many, many, many more.

It is incompatible. The system is incompatible. You've got to do it because air waves belong to the people, the children belong to the people. And you've got to have something for kids that is theirs.

MS. MANZANO: Well, I'd just like to say, the private sector won't pick up the slack because I'm always amazed that "Sesame Street" hasn't been imitated in the private sector. We've been on the air so long, and everybody agrees that we're great. But nobody cares to sort of -- to imitate us. And like you said, there were all these wonderful shows for children that got cancelled right away.

I was asked once to write for a children's show on commercial television. And I asked, what age group is this show aimed at? And they said, oh, you know, kids. (Laughter.) Well, how could -- you don't write for a three-year-old the same way you write for a five-year-old, and certainly not a seven-year-old. So I knew immediately that they hadn't even examined themselves and they didn't even know what they were going to say to these children. It was bottom line. And they started out with the result of what they wanted their show to do which was sell a certain product -- not what the show was about.

MS. CHARREN: And one of the worst problems that happened in the last few years is that the show itself has become a product too often on children's television on commercial broadcasting. And that's unfortunate because it -- that line between editorial and commercial speech so you don't know who's talking to you.

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And it means that we're telling our children, one in four of whom lives below the poverty line, what they should spend money on to feel good, to have friends. And that's really very sad. They can do what they do as long as we have the part of that broadcasting service that is saved for public broadcasting which cares first about the public and first about our children. And I'm not sure they care about anything else at all.

MRS. CLINTON: Joan, do you want to add anything?

MS. DYKSTRA: No. I think everyone has stated it very clearly. I think the bottom line is that we want quality programming for children. They have an opportunity. They can give us quality programming. I fail to see where it is. I do know that PBS brings me quality programming for children.

MRS. CLINTON: You know, I think it's an important point that the economy that we all rely on is driven by a need to create aspirations and expectations and, really, unfilled wants. I mean, that's how people continue to buy goods and services. So that's really the reason -- for a market economy in a way that is going to continue to grow and provide more prosperity for people, it has to be rooted, in a funny kind of way, in people's insecurity. I mean, if all of us today said to ourselves, we have more than enough stuff, we are not buying anything else, and we really meant it, you know, that would not be good for the economy. (Laughter.)

So there is a need on the part of the economy, and particularly one like ours, to continue to try to create in our minds the desire for more and different things. And there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. That is the way the system works.

But I do think there is a dark side that we don't pay attention to. And it's something that was just alluded to -- that when we turn our children and think of our children as miniature adults, and really see them primarily as consumers, as little shoppers who we want to turn into grown-up buyers of as many goods and services as we possibly can sell them, that has a very different perspective than if we see them as individuals with certain potentials who it is our responsibility as parents, as citizens to nurture.

And so there is an inherent conflict as the Professor pointed out. And it is very difficult, I think, to be fair to

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commercial television, for them to fulfill a nurturing developmental responsibility when that is not, as they clearly understand, their bottom line.

So part of what we have to do as a society is to assign different roles and responsibilities to different sectors of our society. And commercial television has a different role and responsibility, particularly as it pertains to children, than public broadcasting.

And I think without that kind of choice, it is very difficult for parents, even those trying hard to be conscientious ones, Joan, to do what they believe they should do. I mean, teaching values to children in between commercials on Saturday morning cartoons is a lot harder, believe me, than watching "Sesame Street" or "Mr. Rogers" or "Barney" or something like that with your child.

So it's not an either/or. And that's what I think we have to keep trying to emphasize. It is not an either/or where it's only commercial television or it's only public broadcasting. It is both. And we have to see the responsibilities, particularly for child rearing, in a much broader way so that each sector of our society, starting with parents, but expanding far beyond just the nuclear family, understands they have a role in determining how well our children turn out.

And that's really what your research has shown is that we know children are going to watch television. What we have to do is provide the best possible choices. But if we don't have the choice, then we've already made the decision, haven't we? And that's what we're trying to avoid in this discussion about what happens with the future of public television.

MR. WRIGHT: I'd like to add a parenting anecdote because I think you did bring in parents and you did bring in teachers, and they are going to be critical in the future of kids' understanding and use of media.

And I'd just like to tell a very quick story. I have four grandchildren, two more on the way. And these four kids love to watch television. They watch lots of television. But none of them, as yet, know that there is such a thing as commercial broadcast entertainment television. I'm not even sure about PBS. And the reason is that television for them is something that you take off the shelf in a little box and put it in a machine and play it. And on

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that shelf are videocassettes and books. And the videocassettes were taped off the air; they were bought; they were rented. I blush to admit, some of them were taped from rented copies. (Laughter.)

But they got there because some parent cared enough to put them there and to let the children watch over and over again, as they do with their favorite books, the stories that are dear and near to them.

MS. CHARREN: And to follow up on that, a lot of the choices that are available from the new technology, which I mentioned earlier, are not available to kids who need them the most. They are expensive. Cable is expensive. Some of the pay channels are money on top of money, and they provide a number of the choices that cable does provide for children, and that if we don't really take care of the public sector of broadcasting, we are going to have a situation in this country that will make what's going on now look nice by comparison when we don't reach one, whole, big portion of kids growing up in America. So I want to take very good care of PBS.

MRS. CLINTON: And I just want to add to that comment, Peggy, that we haven't talked this morning about the evidence that I think is now conclusive about the impact of watching violence on television and on children's behavior. We have argued about this issue ever since the Surgeon General's report back in 1972 talking about the impact of television viewing on children's behavior. There have been many studies since.

And it is like the old problem we have -- every time there is another irrefutable piece of evidence about the linkage between smoking and lung cancer, there will be somebody, well-paid, who will stand up and say, well, that's not definitive. And we face the same problem when we talk about the effects of violence and children's behavior.

But Peggy is right. I mean, this is not just a do-gooder, altruistic, nice thing that people like Peggy and I and the rest of us here think should be done because we like children's television. Certainly, I do. And I believe strongly in it. And that's what my daughter watched, and we read the books that went along with it.

But I am equally concerned about the other side of the equation that the Professor talked about. And that is, those children who are not watching the 25 minutes a day of public

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broadcasting but are, instead, watching the 25 minutes of commercial television without much parental supervision or mediation as to what they are seeing.

It is absolutely true that not every child who watches hundreds of hours of violent television becomes violent. But most of the reason for that rests in the home and the neighborhood that are structured and coherent enough that the child's experience of watching television is mediated. But in the absence of that mediation, and in the absence of the other factors that help a child separate reality from fantasy, that help a child learn empathy and sensitivity, it is absolutely clear that the television-watching habits of vulnerable children will affect both their own violent behavior and their response to violence that they see around them. It has a desensitizing impact.

So this is an issue that we think goes far beyond the narrow concerns of the group of us who are arguing strongly to preserve public television and, particularly, educational and children's programming. It is also a plea to all programmers of television, including commercial television, to think about the impact of your decisions.

The bottom line can be described in many ways. Only one of those descriptions concerns profitability and the dollars that come in. There's a bottom line to society as well. And we think that bottom line is better served by having better television programming for our children

Thank you all very much for being with us. (Applause.)

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THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

For Immediate Release

August 14, 1995

**Remarks by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
to the President's Advisory Committee on
Gulf War Veteran's Illnesses
Washington, DC**

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much. I am delighted to be here at this first meeting, and on behalf of the President, I want to thank the Chair and members of the President's Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses for your willingness to perform this public service. I also want to welcome all the veterans, their friends and families, who are here to talk about their personal experiences and to hear from the Administration officials who have been working diligently on the issues raised in the President's Executive Order creating this Committee.

I want to start by emphasizing again how proud we all are of our victory in the Gulf War. Because of the enormous skill and bravery of American troops, an end was put to Saddam Hussein's brutal and illegal occupation of Kuwait. Because of the strength of U.S. leadership, the international community came together to stop and reverse unprovoked aggression against an innocent nation.

This Presidential Advisory Committee is an important example of the President's commitment to leave no stone unturned in the Administration's efforts to understand Gulf War veterans' illnesses and to make sure that the government is responsive to veterans' needs.

In his announcement, the President assured Gulf War veterans that we are grateful for their bravery, and we are as proud of them today as all of us were when they returned victorious in 1991. And most important, the President made it clear that just as we relied on our troops when they were sent to war, we must assure them that they can rely on us now.

The President and I have heard from many Gulf War veterans and their family members about their illnesses. We have received letters from all over the country, and have had the privilege of meeting with many veterans and family members in person. Some of these men and women, such as Steve Robertson and Nancy Kaplan, will be speaking to you this afternoon.

Veterans have told me about their frustrating efforts to find out why they are ill and how their illnesses can be treated. They have shared moving stories of the devastating effects on families

when fathers and mothers become disabled and unable to work. They have described what it was like to serve their country in a desert land where oil well fires turned the day to night, and where sandstorms made it difficult to breathe. Some described scud missile attacks, or told of frequent use of insecticides to protect them from insect-born diseases.

Many Gulf War veterans have been outspoken in seeking and providing information about their illnesses. This Advisory Committee will determine whether the experiences these veterans describe in the Persian Gulf, and in receiving medical care, have been adequately addressed or whether there are additional actions that need to be taken.

When Secretary Jesse Brown and I met with veterans at the local VA Hospital here in Washington, and when then Deputy Secretary of Defense John Deutch and I met with active duty soldiers at Walter Reed Hospital, the stories we heard touched us deeply, and provided important information as well. I know you will be working closely with veterans, who will be an invaluable resource in your deliberations, and I am pleased you will begin by hearing directly from Gulf War veterans today.

I have also met with the physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals from the VA and DOD who have worked with Gulf War veterans who are ill. They too express great frustration about the difficulties they have faced in helping some of the veterans and their family members whose illnesses remain undiagnosed. I know you will also work closely with these dedicated men and women, and learn from their experiences.

When the men and women of the U.S. military, Reserves, and National Guard were called to war in 1990, our Nation knew that we could rely on them, and they served our nation honorably.

When we look back to the euphoric parades for returning U.S. troops in 1991, we can still remember a great feeling of relief. We had won the war, and most Americans had returned home safely.

But throughout 1991 and 1992, there was increasing concern about some of our Gulf War veterans. There were veterans who described symptoms that did not respond to treatment, and did not go away as expected. When my husband became President and learned that the numbers of veterans with chronic symptoms seemed to be increasing, he took an active interest in helping our veterans.

Because of the leadership and dedication of the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Health and Human Services, this Administration has already made unprecedented efforts to help Gulf War veterans. For example, never before has an Administration moved so quickly to conduct research aimed at helping returning soldiers who are ill. This year alone, the three Departments will

spend approximately \$15 million to study possible environmental hazards, to determine whether illnesses have been transmitted to spouses and children, and to develop improved treatment programs.

With the leadership of the VA, this Administration strongly supported laws to ensure that compensation is available to those who are disabled, even if the direct causes of the illnesses stemming from their military service are unknown. The VA is also providing priority medical care to Gulf War veterans, and both VA and the Defense Department have established special treatment centers to help veterans whose illnesses are particularly difficult to diagnose.

The Defense Department has also recently initiated a new program that will declassify documents and other information about the Gulf War, and make them available on Internet.

All these efforts will serve our veterans well, and most were accomplished with bipartisan support from the 103rd Congress, under the leadership of then Chairmen of the Veterans Affairs Committees, Sen. Jay Rockefeller and Rep. Sonny Montgomery, and their Committee members.

As President Clinton stated when he first announced this Advisory Committee, he is determined to do whatever it takes to respond to the concerns of Gulf War veterans.

This Administration has already convened several other panels of outside experts to examine various issues pertaining to Gulf War veterans' illnesses, but it came to realize that the issues are so complex they require a more comprehensive, sustained effort.

And so the President established this Advisory Committee, to be independent and appropriately staffed, with the relevant experience and expertise that the members represent. This Advisory Committee is unique because, as the President outlined in his Executive Order, you will review all aspects of the Federal governments' programs and policies that affect Gulf War illnesses, telling us what we are doing right and what we should be doing better.

The Executive Order specifies that you will provide "advice and recommendations" based on your review of the following: research; medical treatment; risk factors from service in the Gulf War, including possible environmental factors, and drugs and vaccines; reports of the possible detection of chemical and biological weapons; coordinating efforts that have been established by Federal agencies; external reviews by other expert panels; and outreach to veterans.

As you can see from that list, your mandate is broad. In your efforts to review all these programs and policies, the Secretaries

are pledged to assist you, and you will find their doors open to you. And the President has made it absolutely clear, in his Executive Order and in his announcement of this Advisory Committee, that when you consider your task, no issue is off limits and every reasonable inquiry should be pursued.

There are many opinions about how many Gulf War veterans are ill, what has caused those illnesses, and how they can best be treated. In talking to veterans and to those who are trying to serve them, it is clear that those opinions are as strongly held as they are diverse.

And so, your task is a difficult one. There are many unanswered questions, and we are counting on you to make sure that this Administration is doing all it can to catalog relevant questions and, in so far as possible, answer them.

For that reason, you were selected on the basis of your wide range of expertise in medical issues, scientific research, policy, and military matters. The veterans on the panel will contribute their invaluable perspectives from their military experiences, and it is particularly important that two of you served in the Gulf War. You all were selected because you do not have pre-conceived notions about the scope of the problem of Gulf War illnesses, or the causes and treatment.

None of us knows what the research now being conducted or called for in the future will tell us. So far, the research that the government has conducted indicates that thousands of veterans who were healthy when they left for the Gulf War are now ill. Many veterans believe that these symptoms cluster together into a "Gulf War Syndrome" that is unique. Based on the research to date, however, experts have concluded that there is not enough evidence to call this a syndrome. This is an issue that will continue to be studied as more research is completed.

There are disagreements about the likely causes and the best treatments for these symptoms. These issues also will continue to be studied as more research is completed.

The President has appointed this Advisory Committee because we do not yet have the answers to these important questions. These are complicated scientific questions that deserve careful scientific scrutiny.

In his Executive Order, the President has entrusted you to make sure that the Federal government is supporting appropriate research, and that, whenever possible, the results are being used to inform treatment, compensation, and priorities for future research. You are also entrusted to examine the wide array of Federal programs and policies to make sure that they not only make

sense, but also that they are being administered effectively and humanely.

I want to leave you with the image of an open door. Perhaps your most important tool as you serve on this Committee is your ability to be open-minded, to take advantage of our open-door policy to seek out the information you need to evaluate all existing programs and policies, and to make recommendations to ensure that this Administration will continue to be responsive and responsible to our veterans. We owe them that much, and more, and all of us are grateful for your willingness to take on this important public service. Thank you very much Madame Chairman.

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For Release

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE NATIONAL PTA 100TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
WASHINGTON, D.C.
JUNE 22, 1996**

Thank you. Thank you so very much. Don't you feel like you were at the Olympics when that music started? You know I'm so excited about the Olympics coming, we had the torch arrival and departure at the White House yesterday, and the night before. And when the music started, I thought of all those times as a little girl when I would sit in front of our television set and watch the Olympics. My brothers and I would go out and race each other around, and my mother one time went to the dime store, you see how old I am, the dime store, and bought ribbons for us.

It is such, a pleasure for me to be with people who care so much about the values that make our country what it is, and who know how important it is to support our children. I want to thank Joan for that introduction, but more than that, for the leadership she has given on behalf on the PTA. She has been a strong, strong voice. And I know she is going to be succeeded by a strong, strong successor. So the leadership of the PTA is in good hands.

And how fortunate we are to be celebrating the 100th anniversary of this important group. I wasn't able to see the slides but I heard some of the laughter and I know that Joan did a quick change from the clothes she was wearing to the clothes she is wearing now. We are celebrating a centennial commitment to the children of this country. And there are lots of parallels between the times when the PTA got started and our times today. I was thinking as I stood backstage that a hundred years ago, we were changing from a society that was primarily agricultural and rural to one that was industrial, where people were leaving the farms and crossing the oceans to come to our cities. Where we faced new challenges about how to educate young people of different backgrounds to be prepared for a new century.

And here we are again, as we move from the industrial age, from the cold war, from the hot wars of this century, to a time when the global economy and technology have changed our world so much, and once again you are ready. You are ready to help us meet our challenges and protect our values. And for that as a mother and citizen, I say thank you -- thank you to the PTA and all of you who are among its leaders.

And during your conference here, I hope you will continue to celebrate your achievements. Since the turn of the century, the national PTA has been at the forefront of our country's efforts to create a better world for all children. Child labor laws, compulsory public education, the national health service, special education, juvenile justice issues, all that we have addressed as a nation in the past hundred years -- in these and many issues, we have seen the strong role that the PTA has played, both at the national level and in countless communities across our country.

And I know that as we prepare for a new century, and for a new millennium, all of us can count on your being there again. On behalf of the President, I want to thank you for helping to put the well-being of our children first in the recent budget negotiations. The PTA was one of the first organizations that realized that threats to programs like school lunches were threats to the well-being of all our children. Your rallies on the Hill and your participation in an active education coalition were key to our efforts to honor America's historic commitment to education, and to providing all children in this country with the knowledge and skills they will need to fulfill their own god-given potential.

And I am so pleased that your priorities and initiatives for the next years will also address these important issues -- protecting children from violence, AIDS education, reaching out to preschool parents, working with schools of education at colleges and universities to make it possible for more parents to be encouraged to participate in their children's education. Parental involvement is the key to how well our children will do.

Some of you know that I do think it takes a village to raise a child, but it takes strong parents who are committed to being their children's first teachers, to make sure those children get a good start in life, and to make sure the village lives up to our responsibilities as well. But despite all of the work you have done and the stands you have taken, we cannot let down our guard. We must stand very firmly on the side of public education and we need an even louder chorus of parental voices in the upcoming fights over the budgets to come. Because, even as teachers and schools prepare to welcome record numbers of students, some fifty-two million this September, and we know that our classrooms will be filled with more children than there were even in the baby-boom generation. And these children will need the time and attention of more teachers. They will need text books, they will need school buildings that are not falling down around their ears.

And yet there are some in congress who are proposing to freeze the education budget in the face of this new generation of students who need the same support that I could expect when I was

going to school. This is a time to invest in education, not a time to retreat from our historic investment.

You know that as our global economy becomes even more competitive and demanding, that all of us -- children and adults -- must sharpen and raise our skills -- we cannot walk away from the higher national educational standards set by Goals 2000. The national PTA helped turn Goals 2000 into law. And it is working well in 46 states. I ask you to help us defend these standards from those who would wish to reverse this progress.

I also want to congratulate American public education; too many people for too long have only accented the negative, and I for one am tired of that. America is filled with good news and positive stories about how people are solving problems. And just recently we saw a report that American students are second to only students in Finland when it comes to reading ability. Let's make sure Americans know that, because we've sure gotten all the bad news about educational achievement in the past.

So we know we can make progress and our students can live up to high expectations, but we have to keep working. And I urge the National PTA to become an active partner in Secretary Riley's "Read Write Now" effort. He is attempting to link one million disadvantaged kids with three hundred thousand reading mentors this summer. It is the one-on-one personal connection that nobody, nobody can argue against. It is what lights the eyes of a youngster who all of a sudden recognizes a word, and it is what warms the heart of the adult who takes the time to work with that child. Just think of what they could do to turn around the lives and school success of young people, if three hundred thousand of us mentor a young boy or girl this summer.

We also know that computer skills are important and the President is attempting to make sure that every school is hooked up in America to the Internet. We do need to make sure that there are technology literacy funds available, but even more so we have to make sure that our teachers are trained to use those computers in the classrooms.

So there is much, as you gather here in Washington, you have every reason to be proud of. I was thinking to myself how in the last few years the National PTA is again at the forefront of our debates about education, and about our children. And we know that parents today need to help. Every one of us has some area where we rely on someone else. Whether it's the teachers or schools, the doctors and nurses or hospitals, the police on our streets, the people we will never meet, who make sure our air and water are clean and that our food is fit to eat -- we are all interconnected. But I want to spend a few minutes today talking about specially the challenges we parents face in today's world. Particularly because we are living in a media dominated age.

It is a topic I feel very strongly about, and I want to expand on the thoughts I shared with some of you at the National PTA Legislative Conference earlier this year.

Specifically, I want to talk about television. Like it or not, and some days I do and some days I don't, TV is a fact of life. Hundreds of channels with everything from up-to-the-date-news to 24-hour-a-day weather channels to talk shows, to violent movies, to what everyone finds as we use our remote control devices. And for many of our children, those television images are disturbing, they are what some call "junk food for the eyes." And we have in every home in America children who are being influenced by the images and ideas that come into those homes through our television sets.

Now for those of us who are parents, trying to raise healthy, well-adjusted, compassionate children, it is easy sometimes to feel helpless against such a barrage of images and negative influences. But, in no small part due to the National PTA's advocacy and leadership on this issue, we are finally on the road to changing this situation. Let me thank you for working with the National Cable Television Association in the Family and Community Critical Viewing Project, which is helping parents to control the effects of television violence and commercialism on their children.

The President and the Vice President have long supported efforts to give parents the tools to make television a positive influence in their children's lives. And I believe that these past few months have marked a hopeful turning point for families and their relationships to those TV sets in their homes.

Earlier this year, the President successfully advocated for what is called a v-chip in TV sets. It is a device that parents can use to block out programming that they consider objectionable. It is totally within the authority of the parents. In February, at a White House meeting, The President helped persuade the nation's television broadcasters and producers to establish a voluntary ratings system that will inform parents about the content of shows they plan to air. That means that when the v-chip is operational, in just a few years, and the ratings system is going, parents will be able to make judgments by looking at this rating system and then programming the TV set to decide whether or not a program will be permitted to be viewed in their homes.

But parents don't just want to tune out bad shows, they also want to tune in good ones for their children. American families need more and better programming for children. This is especially true for elementary school-age children. A study released by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center showed that while 75 percent of programming aimed

at pre-schoolers could be called "high-quality," just 26 percent of programs targeted toward children ages six to eleven could be called good. Nearly half of the programming was rated "low quality."

Now the President, with your help, has been working hard to establish a minimum requirement for television broadcasters: all that we are taking is for three hours a week of educational, child-friendly programming. I don't think that is too much to ask. And the good news is that it's on the verge of happening. A majority of the FCC Commissioners will soon, I believe, take positive action on this issue.

The three-hour requirement is simple, and it is fair. As Vice President Gore noted a few days ago, "It leaves 98 percent of broadcasting time for other programs."

Next month, the President, the Vice-President, Tipper Gore, and I will meet with media executives and children's programmers to discuss ways to strengthen children's television.

We simply must demand more of the people who are producing - and profiting -- from the shows that young people watch. From my point of view, the very popular "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" show, for example, has no place on any lineup described as "children's programming."

Experts have said that the show is "devoid of any enriching value." "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" show for the example has no place in any line-up described as children's programming. Experts have said that show is devoid of any enriching value. "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" is one of the most violent television programs, on television today. Hundreds of acts of violence, from kicking to missile launches, are depicted in each episode. The shows teach children that heroes always resolve any conflict through violence. They convey to children the sinister message that the more powerful your weapon, the more powerful you are. And even though they are zapped, kicked and fired upon countless times, the Power Rangers never feel any pain or suffer any injury.

As a result of the show's popularity, young children on playgrounds across America are imitating these so-called "superheroes," they kick, they punch, they fight each other, as well as the imaginary archvillains Rita Repulsa and Lord Zedd.

Now you and I know that kind of playground activity has been a hallmark of playgrounds for generations. Long before television, and long before specific shows like the "Power Rangers". But the repetition, the intensity of this message that children see over and over again on television is different.

As Dr. Robert Phillips of the American Psychiatric Association explained, "Children are like little VCRs, they see something once and then they repeat it over and over again."

I know this not just from experts and news accounts, but from children themselves. At a roundtable discussion about the V-chip and TV violence with children and their parents, some of whom were PTA members, I met a 10-year old boy who told me that his playmates "just pretend they are Mighty Morphin Power Rangers or the X-Men and then they'll just go around pretending they're killing each other or such things and think nothing of it."

Producers and broadcasters of shows like the "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" say that they are simply giving children what they want to watch. In truth, they are appealing to the worst in our kids at the very times they are most likely to be watching TV. And, broadcasters are hiding the best children's programming in the least-watched "throw-away" hours.

We must stop showing violent, harmful programs to our kids during prime viewing hours. It is time for our media executives to show some greater responsibility for the children of America.

And as adults and as parents it is time for us to stand up and be counted. Decency and civility are values that are critical to the functioning of our society. Otherwise, in the absence of efforts to reach out to one other to teach each other good and positive lessons about how we work together and about how children grow up together, we will find ourselves and our children so inured to violence and sensationalism that we will not be able to help themselves.

We have enough evidence now from psychological and educational studies which shows that children, particularly from less stable homes, without the kind of structure that many of us have tried to impose, despite the media in our own houses, these children are particularly vulnerable to such messages. And they take those messages to heart. Like those little VCR's and they play back what they have learned.

As parents we cannot wait to act. We are on the front lines. We have to take responsibility, we have to start in our own homes by making clear what is and what is not acceptable television watching. We have to be willing to work with our schools as you have done to help families learn how to watch television critically, and to raise questions so that children know the difference between fantasy and reality. We have to give children something else to do besides watch television hour after hour after hour.

In many neighborhoods we should be working to keep schools open from three to six so that children are not on their own and unsupervised. We should be enlisting ourselves once again in programs, not only to mentor young people but to play with them, more recreational activities. We should take a stand against the

policies making it more difficult for young people to find extracurricular opportunities.

I was recently in Denver and I young man told me that he had been a wrestler for his first two years in high school, but next year because of budget cutbacks his family was being asked to pay \$150 for him to participate in that extracurricular activity. Many of us saw the Richard Dreyfuss movie, "Mr. Holland's Opus" and we could chart the decline in the drama, music, and art that was available that I took for granted in the 1950's and 1960's in my schools, where children now are not being given those opportunities. Television is being used to fill a void that parents, teachers, schools and communities used to fill with positive, productive activities for young people supervised by adults.

So while we take a stand against what we see on television, we should take a stand as you have done on behalf of providing more opportunities for children to say yes to, to give them something that is positive for them to learn from and be part of. There is wonderful opportunity in our country now, because I feel it as I travel around from place to place. Americans are tired of just wringing our hands at our problems -- we want to roll up our sleeves and get about the business of solving them.

And every where I go I find people who are doing just that. And it doesn't matter if I'm in an inner city school in Philadelphia, or in a school outside of Duluth, or in Corpus Christie, or in the San Frenado valley of California, everywhere I go it is so heartening to me, because every parent I talk with, every teacher, every young person is saying the same thing -- they are saying to me, as a young boy in Philadelphia, in a very tough neighborhood, in an inner city school that was attempting to be a haven against gangs, and graphti, and violence, he looked at me and he said, "You know Mrs. Clinton, most of us are good kids, but the only kids who get the attention are the bad kids, you know they are the only kids who get on television, they are the only kids who people really worry about sometimes, and most of us are really doing the best we can."

And I believe that, I know, I've looked into the faces of thousands and thousands of preschooler, and elementary kids, and middle schoolers, and high school students, and they are good kids. And even the ones who are teetering on the brink of gang pressures and family disruptions, and all of the problems children should not have to contend with, but do in today's world, they are desperate to be pulled back. They want some adult to say to them, 'You are a good young person, don't waste your life, learn to read, get out and do something positive for somebody else. Don't feel sorry for yourself, don't let yourself be turned into a victim.'

That is what the PTA has done for a hundred years. Because you have brought together parents and teachers in a partnership. You have presented a united front to our children that reminds ne

of my late father who used to say "You get in trouble in school, you get in trouble at home." And you know, that's the way it needs to be again.

And that is the crusade you are leading. Our children need to know that the adults in their lives care about them and we care about them so much that we not only love them, we discipline them. And we not only teach them, we guide them. And we're not only trying to do our best at home we are trying to make sure they get their best at school. That is what we owe to our children.

That is what you have done for a hundred years. And I believe that, just as at the time the PTA was formed, you have never been more necessary. You have never been more important to parents, struggling to make sense of a world that is sometimes very difficult to understand. You have never been more important to stand up against the forces of commercialism that would use our children, that would try to sell them products, like tobacco at an early age, that is not good for them.

You have stood against those kinds of pressures, and what we now must do, is with the same level of confidence and optimism that created the PTA, go forth into this next century, just as committed, just as concerned and just as ready to take on the challenges of this century, as were those who came before you.

I am very optimistic, I see positive signs everywhere I go of people taking back whether it's the authority in their own homes over the television set, or parental involvement in the schools. And what I hope each of us will do as we meet our challenges and protect our values, is to make it clear to every American, that commitment to children, to their education, their health and to their well-being is not a luxury. It is central to what of nation and people we will be.

Lady Bird Johnson once said that children are likely to live up to what you believe of them. I want every child in America to have at least one adult in their lives who believes that child has God given potential that will enable that child to be a good productive citizen, a good worker, a good family-member. And if we could just commit ourselves to reaching out to all those children, then I believe our future is in very good hands.

Thank you for what you have done for one hundred years, but do not grow weary doing this work -- we need the PTA now more than ever. Thank you all very much.

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TALKING IT OVER**BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON****RELEASE: WEEKEND, FEBRUARY 10-11, 1996**

I always admired Christopher Reeve as an actor. I never saw him on Broadway, but like most people, I loved his movie portrayal of Superman and his role in the fantasy romance "Somewhere in Time."

My admiration has only grown since his riding accident last May. Christopher Reeve is no longer playing a part that's heroic. He's living one.

Hooked up to a ventilator and paralyzed from the neck down, he has inspired millions with his courageous response to a tragic and freak fall from a horse. Who wasn't moved by his candor and grace in the memorable interview he gave to Barbara Walters just a few months after his spinal cord was crushed?

Now, along with his painstaking recovery, he faces medical bills totaling \$400,000 a year. With an insurance policy that limits the lifetime benefits he can receive, his coverage is due to run out after three years.

Still, he never dwells on his own situation. As a celebrity, he knows he can make a living giving speeches and directing films. He is far more worried about the tens of millions of Americans who can't get or keep medical coverage because of the misplaced priorities of our health care system.

Christopher Reeve wants to know why our country is willing to spend billions of dollars on Medicare and Medicaid payments to cover nursing-home fees for quadriplegics and those suffering from neurological diseases like Lou Gehrig's, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's but not spend the lesser amounts it would take to find cures.

I know the health care reform effort I worked on was not successful. But the issues it raised and the problems it sought to resolve are still with us today.

The United States is the only industrial society in the world where insurance companies are allowed to deny coverage to people who are sick or have lost a job. And insurance companies continue to get away with limiting people's lifetime benefits.

As Christopher Reeve said just last week, "These issues are crucial to our welfare."

There are ways to make progress without a massive overhaul of the health care system.

Right now, a bipartisan bill that deals with some of these issues is stuck in Congress. Sponsored by Republican Sen. Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas and Democratic Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, the bill would make long-overdue changes in the ways insurance companies treat Americans.

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It would prevent insurers from denying coverage to a person who already has a medical condition. It would forbid insurance companies from dropping longtime customers when they become chronically ill.

And it would require insurance companies to sell policies to workers who have been covered for at least 18 months by their employers so that they remain insured even if they lose or leave a job.

There is also an amendment to the bill, sponsored by Republican Sen. James Jeffords of Vermont, that would help the 230,000 Americans in situations similar to Christopher Reeve's. It would raise the lifetime limit on benefits to a minimum of \$10 million.

The Kennedy-Kassebaum bill has support from dozens of Republicans and Democrats. It is now ready for a vote by the full Senate. Very few legislators have publicly opposed the bill.

So why hasn't it passed?

Because a handful of senators have used parliamentary maneuvering to stall it for five months. To make matters worse, we cannot even hold the senators accountable because the Senate's rules allow them to remain anonymous.

Christopher Reeve is pushing hard for passage of Kennedy-Kassebaum and the Jeffords amendment. He also is doing his part to educate people about the failures of a system that spends far more money on expensive treatments than on preventing and curing costly diseases.

He has written to the President and House Speaker Newt Gingrich about congressional threats to cut funds for research into spinal cord injuries and neurological diseases (and is proud to have lobbied successfully against some of those cuts).

He has worked on animated diagrams for television that explain what happens to the body when the spinal cord is injured. And he recently announced an effort to establish the Reeve-Irvine Research Center at the University of California at Irvine that will support the study of spinal cord injuries and diseases. Philanthropist Joan Irvine Smith has agreed to put up \$1 million for the project to be matched with money from other sources.

"There is a humanitarian and economic rationale" for medical research and fair insurance policies, he says. "It's good for the country in every conceivable way."

If you agree with Christopher Reeve, take the time to call your senators and ask them to help us take a first step to bringing better health and peace of mind to millions of Americans. Tell them to pass the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill.

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FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES
"COMING UP TALLER" REPORT ON AT-RISK YOUTH
THE WHITE HOUSE
APRIL 26, 1996

Thank you all. Thank you very much. Thank you and welcome to the White House. And I want to start by thanking the Chicago Children's Choir because we were, Richard and the rest of us, in the Blue Room getting ready for the program. I'm going to ask them to sing again in the middle and the end of the program because I really appreciate their being here.

I want to thank so many people, but let me start with Sheldon Hackney, and Jane Alexander and Diane Frankel who, through thick and through thin, have remained tireless in their efforts to promote our nation's rich cultural and artistic legacy. And the good news is that a day after there was an agreement on the 1996 budget, we still can say that the United States supports the arts, and the humanities and our museums. And we're just so grateful for the constancy of effort that many of you brought to this struggle in encouraging members of Congress and others to understand that our country needed to have the kind of commitment represented by these agencies. So, I want to thank all of you for making that possible.

On behalf of the President, let me also convey our very deep appreciation to the members of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Under the leadership of John Brademas, you have devoted considerable time and attention over the past year to helping children discover their creative potential through art, words, and ideas. And I would like to ask all the members of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, starting with Mr. Brademas, to please stand so that we can recognize and thank all of you for your work.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the countless artists, teachers, museum professionals and community leaders across our country who are offering our children positive alternatives, often amidst violence, and destruction, and despair. These men and women, many of whom are in this room representing thousands and thousands of others across our country, believe in the promise of every child, and in the power of the arts and humanities to transform children's lives. Your dedication and expertise have given and will continue to give thousands and thousands of children new hope and confidence in their own future. And I am very grateful that those of you who

could be here were able to join us today.

You know, every day, through the media, particularly television, we hear so many negative stories about America's children. We hear about children floundering in a sea of confusion, frustration, anger, and violence. We hear about children growing up in environments that are so impoverished -- economically and spiritually -- that they cannot resist the lure of drugs, gangs, and other forms of destructive behavior.

But there are so many more positive stories to tell. There are so many young people and children, who despite the odds, are going forward with optimism and confidence in their own lives.

I was in a school in Philadelphia a few weeks ago, and a young boy in seventh grade said, "You know, Mrs. Clinton, all we hear about are the bad kids; nobody really pays attention to us, and we're trying real hard to do the best we can." He said, "It must be like when an airplane crashes; everybody pays attention, and people forget about the thousands that land safely everyday." And I told him that I would do my part, as each of you is doing, to make sure that the positive stories get told. That we know that in every corner of America there are examples of children -- who might otherwise have been written off --- discovering joy, and fulfillment, and discipline and confidence. And often the way they are doing that is through artistic and intellectual expression.

The study that the President's Committee is releasing today, called "Coming Up Taller," offers compelling evidence that the arts and humanities provide young people with creative, productive, and safe outlets for their energy.

My husband often says, "Children need something to say yes to." And what better to say yes to than music, dance, painting, poetry, writing, drama, history, photography and other forms of creative expression.

The Committee's study -- which was funded entirely by private sources -- cites numerous instances of children whose school work, social habits, and outlooks on life have improved with exposure to arts and humanities programs.

I couldn't possibly relate every story. I hope you will read the report with the care it deserves. But for example, let me just mention a few:

-- One teenager, at risk of dropping out of high school, became involved with an artists-in-training program sponsored by the Opera Theatre of St. Louis. Now she has a full scholarship to college and is in her second year studying voice.

-- A sixth-grader growing up in a low-income area of Philadelphia joined *The People's Light and Theater Company*, which works with students after school on a year-round basis. The students wrote, improvised and performed plays, including works of Shakespeare. Today, the girl is one of the top students in the 12th grade and is hoping to become a lawyer. I'll have to talk to her about that decision. Her 19 classmates in the program will all graduate from high school this spring.

-- A four-year-old boy came to pre-school every day but never talked. One day, as part of an early childhood arts program, the boy drew a picture in class, and began to tell his classmates the story behind his picture. Since then, his development has flourished through arts projects.

Each of these cases illustrates the benefits that come when children are engaged in activities that teach new skills, build strong interpersonal relationships, emphasize excellence, and provide a stable, safe environment that enhances learning and growth.

The President is extremely proud that his Administration -- through the National Endowment for the Arts, and its partnerships with the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Corporation for National Service -- as well as the ongoing work of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum Services, has consistently supported creative alternatives for young people.

Clearly our nation today faces great challenges and difficult choices when it comes to how we allocate federal resources. But I hope that, as we establish priorities for a new millennium, Americans will appreciate that the very small amount of public support given to the arts and humanities is a down payment on our future. It is not only an investment in our young people -- it is an investment in the values we claim to honor and the cultural traditions in which our democracy has flourished for more than 200 years.

If we care about civility, character, and our democratic freedoms, then we ought to support the federal agencies and institutions whose mission it is to make American culture available to all children, not just those whose parents can introduce them, but every child in whom that spark can be lit if they are given the chance.

Now this is National Poetry Month, and there is probably no better way to express what we all feel and what brings us together here than to quote some of the eloquent words from Rita Dove, our National Poet Laureate from 1993 to 1995. As Ms. Dove reminds us:

"If children are unable to voice what they mean, no one will know how they feel. If they can't imagine a different world, they are stumbling through a darkness made all the more sinister by its lack of reference points. For a young person growing up in America's alienated and disparate neighborhoods, there can be no greater empowerment than to dare to speak from the heart -- and then to discover that one is not alone in one's feelings. Once hope and self-esteem have been engendered, the work of redefining the future can begin."

Well that is what we are about the business of doing, engendering hope and self-esteem and trying to redefine a better, more optimistic and confident future. Indeed, when we hear the extraordinary voices of the Chicago Children's Choir, or the words of the two young people who will talk to us today -- or when we learn from Bill Strickland about his experiences as a student and teacher in children's art programs -- we know that our rich cultural traditions are alive and well and safely guarded for the future.

Thank all of you for your resilience in the face of some opposition and misunderstanding, for continuing to believe in America's children, and for understanding the roles that our arts and culture play in our individual and collective lives.

We are so honored today to have one of our finest actors and citizens with us. Certainly those of us who have followed his career have appreciated so much of what he has brought to the screen, the way he has moved us, the way he has provoked us, but recently he has, through a particular movie, reminded us of how important the work teaching of young people is when it comes to the arts. I was asked recently what my favorite movie of the year was, and I said " Mr. Holland's Opus." Not only because it started in the 1960's, when I was in high school, so I sat there looking at those white socks and tennis shoes the girls were wearing, seeing the scenes in the hallways, living through all that I can recall, but also remembering what it was like when I was in high school and even the smallest school, in the poorest state - like my husband's school in Hot Springs, Arkansas - had a band, had an orchestra, had art classes, had drama classes, put on plays. And now I look around, and just as we saw in the movie, those are considered frills. They're being cut out. No one wants to go to the trouble or spend the relatively meager resources needed to give children a chance to flower in ways that will give them the positive direction that some many of them need. I'm really grateful for that movie, but I'm even more grateful for the support and the career of Mr. Richard Dreyfuss. Please join me in welcoming him here today. Thank you.

**TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

When you think of the arts in America, what first pops into your mind? If you're like most of us, you probably have an image of adults -- wealthy adults -- who have the time and money to go to the opera, attend a play or concert, or spend hours browsing through a museum.

In fact, the greatest beneficiaries of public funding for the arts are America's children. Through federal support of local arts agencies and community groups, hundreds of thousands of children each year are able to discover the joy, discipline and self-confidence that comes from their own artistic and creative expression.

That's why current arguments about limiting public funding for the arts are so misguided -- and short-sighted. Learning to paint, dance, write poetry, act, sing or play an instrument gives children reasons to believe in themselves and their own futures.

For many children from impoverished backgrounds, exposure to the arts can literally mean the difference between a life of accomplishment and one of hopelessness and failure. This idea is not my own; a recent report issued by the President's Committee for the Arts and Humanities, "Coming Up Taller," identified cultural programs that provide young people with safe and productive alternatives to crime, violence, gangs, drugs and other disturbing elements of popular culture.

One of those is the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild in Pittsburgh. It is a testament to the power of the arts to transform children's lives. The organization, which is supported by both the National Endowment for the Arts and donations from corporate and private foundations, trains inner-city schoolchildren in ceramic art and photography and opens their ears to world-class music.

But its students learn much more than how to shape clay, take pictures and appreciate jazz. They leave the guild knowing that they have the potential and tools to become successful and productive citizens. Eighty percent of the guild's students go on to college.

I met Bill Strickland, the founder of the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, last month at a White House ceremony to celebrate arts programs that serve "at-risk" youth. Bill was himself headed in a downward spiral, he says, until an inner-city art teacher introduced him to "ceramics, jazz, and beautiful objects" and taught him that "having ideas had value."

"I learned that I could achieve recognition from my peers through creative activity," he says.

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Determined to give other children the same opportunities he enjoyed, he founded the guild. "The antidote for these 'at-risk' children, we have discovered, is to surround them with good architecture, good food, good artists and good teachers who are allowed to function in well-equipped environments and who will not accept anything less than the best that the human imagination can provide," he says.

Hundreds of young people have passed through the guild's doors during the past nine years. In that time, the guild has never had a police call, a fight, or a drug or alcohol-related incident. Although it's located in one of Pittsburgh's most depressed neighborhoods, there are no bars on the windows, security cameras in the building or guards at the door.

"Given the current enthusiasm for building prisons to lock people up," Bill said, "I would challenge them to build centers like this one to set children free."

While those who oppose public funding for programs like the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild have not succeeded in abolishing the National Endowment for the Arts and other federal cultural programs, their crusade will continue. And that means that all of us who care about the arts -- and what the arts can do for children -- have to work as hard as we can to protect a 30-year bipartisan commitment to making the arts more accessible to more Americans.

That historical commitment represents a belief that the arts have the power not only to improve our aesthetic surroundings but to improve our society as well. Learning about culture, after all, is fundamental to understanding our own heritage and the diverse world in which we live.

I find it particularly ironic that those who bemoan America's loss of values (particularly those arising from Western civilization) are often the first to recommend cutting public funds for the arts. Without federal support for arts programs, countless children would never be exposed to Sophocles, Shakespeare or Mozart -- or the painting of Georgia O'Keeffe, the music of Wynton Marsalis and the dance of Arthur Mitchell.

Today, funding for the NEA costs every American 32 cents a year, less than the price of a candy bar. For those who wonder whether it is money well spent, ask yourself this question: Would you rather see a child pick up a paintbrush or a pistol? Would you rather see a child pick up a guitar or a gun?

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May 21, 1996

**TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The woman visited her new daughter in the hospital every day, reaching into the incubator to stroke her foot. The receiving blanket seemed heavier than the baby, who was being fed by a tube in her stomach.

The woman is not the baby's birth mother, but she is her mother in every way that matters.

She and her husband already had a 3-year-old adopted son when they heard about a premature 1-pound baby girl whose birth parents could not take care of her. The couple decided to adopt the tiny baby. Her start was rocky, but now the child is a healthy 3-year-old.

"She was just like a little flower that blossomed," the mother says. "She is a burst of energy."

Now, the couple, who are African-American, are in the process of adopting a 12-year-old girl who was abused. They also are encouraging more African-American families to open their homes to children in need.

Last summer, I wrote about this important issue. I'm writing about it again because so many children's lives would be better if they could only find a home. Today, 21,000 children are ready and waiting for families to nurture and care for them. Tens of thousands of others will be eligible for adoption in the coming months and years.

Not all these children are healthy, white babies. Many are physically and developmentally disabled. Many are minorities. Many suffer from emotional traumas wrought by abuse, neglect and unstable living arrangements. And many are teenagers who already have been shuffled from home to home.

Fortunately, some steps have been taken in recent years to make adoption easier. The Family and Medical Leave Act, which became law three years ago, ensures that parents can take time off when they adopt a child without fear of losing their jobs. The Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 prohibits adoption agencies from denying the placement of a child solely on the basis of the adoptive parents' race, color or national origin. Over the past three years, adoption subsidies have helped an increasing number of families cope with the costs of adopting and raising children with special needs.

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The President is supporting legislation in Congress that will give tax credits to families that adopt. The House, for example, just approved a bill that would give adoptive families a \$5,000 tax credit. The Senate, meanwhile, is considering a \$7,500 credit for families who adopt children with special needs. This may not be enough to cover medical and emotional health care costs for special-needs kids, or even education, but it's a step in the right direction.

Not only is adoption good for children, it saves taxpayers a lot of money. As one woman said at a recent adoption discussion at the White House her family has saved the state and the federal government in excess of \$1 million by adopting several special-needs children.

In addition to government, the private sector also has a role to play. Wendy's, the hamburger chain founded by adoption advocate Dave Thomas (who himself was adopted), gives workers paid leave and financial assistance with adoption costs.

Margaret Fitzgerald, who participated in our gathering, said her employer, AT&T, gave her six weeks of unpaid leave when she and her husband adopted a son four years ago. The company also reimbursed her legal fees.

But the most important thing of all is for more people to reach out and give every child, regardless of age, disability, race or ethnic origin, the chance to be part of a loving family.

Just ask Julie Stinger, a teacher with five adopted children -- four biracial and one white -- several of whom had health problems. She told us how, as a white woman, she had to fight to adopt her first two black children, even though the birth parents agreed to the adoption and she had cared for them as a foster parent for 18 months. "I fought tooth and nail," she said.

Later, she had similar trouble when she wanted to adopt her fifth child, who is white. Authorities were concerned about placing a white boy with four non-white brothers and sisters.

"Even though we went through some traumas in the adoptions, I would do it again, I would do it 10 times over," she said. "Adopting a child is the most gratifying thing that ever happened to me."

After Julie recounted her story, I asked her oldest son, Joey, if he had anything to add. He nodded.

"I just want to thank my mother," he said.

TALKING IT OVER**BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON****RELEASE: WEEKEND, OCTOBER 21-22, 1995**

Every Thursday, a woman named Miriam volunteers in my staff office at the White House. She is a retired schoolteacher, mother of two, proud grandmother and caring colleague who seldom arrives at work without cakes, cookies, pies or donuts for the staff.

I wish her story ended here. But it doesn't. Like more than 2 million other women in America, Miriam has breast cancer.

She found a lump in her breast five years ago. Since then, she has undergone two surgeries, 33 days of radiation treatments and five separate chemotherapies, including the debilitating sessions she now has every week.

Miriam is not the only woman I know who is battling this disease. In fact, it is hard to find a family in our country -- or a workplace, neighborhood, church group or social club -- that has not been touched by breast cancer.

My mother-in-law, Virginia Kelley, died last year after a four-year struggle with the disease. The mother of one of my best friends was diagnosed a few months ago. Another friend just told me that his sister -- only 41 years old -- has a massive lump as well.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and if you want a chilling statistic, here it is: One in eight women in our country will develop breast cancer during her lifetime, compared to one in 20 a generation ago. And 46,000 American women will die of breast cancer this year.

Those numbers shouldn't be so high. When detected early and treated aggressively, breast cancer does not have to be an automatic death sentence. Every week, I meet women who are longtime breast cancer survivors living full and healthy lives. The key to early detection is a regular mammogram, particularly for women over 65, who account for half of all breast cancer cases.

Younger women should discuss with their doctors whether they should get regular mammograms. When I turned 40, for example, I began having one every year.

In traveling around the country to talk with women about breast cancer, I was startled to learn that only 40 percent of older women, whose mammograms are now covered by Medicare, actually take advantage of this potentially lifesaving benefit.

Why do so many women fail to get mammograms?

Unfortunately, many are reluctant to get screened because they have been told that the procedure is painful or embarrassing. Others don't realize that the benefit is covered under Medicare. Some women lack insurance coverage or the funds to pay for the test. Still others have never been told by their doctors that a mammogram is one of

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the most effective ways of detecting malignant breast lumps. Some women have even told me they didn't want to find out if they were sick because they believed there was little they could do about it.

Finally, many women are so busy taking care of their families that they forget to take care of their own health.

I know that a mammogram is not the most comfortable experience. And when you are responsible for kids, a spouse, a job and all the other pressures of daily life, taking the time to get one may seem like too much of a hassle.

But getting a mammogram is a lot more comfortable and a lot more convenient than the pain that comes with cancer and its treatments.

That's why it's important that Medicare continue to cover older women for mammograms every two years and at any other time a doctor believes it is necessary. And it would be a big step forward if communities and local health facilities also offered screenings once a year for women who don't have health insurance or would otherwise be unable to afford a mammogram.

When appropriate, doctors, regardless of their specialty, should encourage women patients to have regular mammograms. Any woman who fears breast cancer should remember that if she does have the disease, she should find out as quickly as possible so that she can begin treatment and get on with living her life.

That's what Miriam does. My staff and I often talk about how much we admire her courage and her selflessness. She tells us that she gets through her treatments by setting personal goals: getting her kitchen remodeled or living to see the birth of her new granddaughter, who was born last month. Now she is looking ahead to her 60th birthday in March.

She says she is no longer afraid of the disease and has no plans to stop her volunteer work. "I will come in until I just can't do it anymore," she said a few days ago. "The chemo hasn't knocked me down yet."

What impresses me most about Miriam is not just her grace or sense of humor but her willingness to talk about breast cancer so that others can learn from her experience.

"Get a mammogram," she frequently reminds us. "It's much less frightening than not having the chance to see your children grow up or your grandchildren graduate from high school. You owe it to yourself and your family."

We should all listen to the words of one so wise.

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TALKING IT OVER**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON****RELEASE: WEEKEND, AUGUST 12-13, 1995**

Have you seen what's on daytime television lately? During a recent workout, I started channel surfing, and the first show I saw was about wild teen-agers and their mothers. Another network featured women who use men for money. And on a third were people who believe their thoughts are controlled by aliens.

I cringed.

Then, I found refuge in Big Bird.

For many parents across our country, there is great comfort in knowing that however prurient, violent or sensational daytime programming has become, there is still an oasis for children called public television.

The truth is, my daughter is a Sesame Street kid. When she was younger, we would tune in together and read the books that went along with the shows. Over the years, my husband and I could see that Big Bird, Ernie, Bert and Cookie Monster had helped her learn to spell, count and, perhaps just as important, appreciate the cultural richness of our country.

But my daughter's experience is not the only reason I am disturbed by recent attacks on public television. There is no escaping that television is a pervasive influence in the lives of all of our children -- one that can have a significant impact, positive or negative, on their social and intellectual development.

A friend told me recently about the time her daughter came home from the first day of school and was so excited that she couldn't stop talking about it. After telling her parents about everything that had happened, she went to the television set and told Mr. Rogers too. Can you imagine that child having the same conversation with the Power Rangers?

The little girl's story gives us a window on the latest research. Studies show that children who watch programs like "Sesame Street," "Barney" and "Mister Rogers Neighborhood" are better prepared to learn by the time they begin kindergarten than children who watch only commercial television. Early on, reading becomes a part of their lives. So do numbers, ideas and a rich imagination.

In fact, just at that wonderful stage when young children seem to absorb every new word and concept they come across, educational television provides a unique learning tool. Even watching as little as 25 minutes a day can help.

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Researchers have found that low-income children between the ages of 2 and 5 who watch a small amount of educational programming do significantly better on tests of reading potential, vocabulary, mathematical reasoning and overall readiness for school.

By contrast, kids who spend the same amount of time watching non-educational cartoons and adult programs are not as well prepared for learning in school.

Recently, Sonia Manzano, known to millions of children as "Maria" on "Sesame Street," came to the White House to talk about educational television. She described what it was like to grow up in the Bronx as a Hispanic child who never saw anyone who looked or talked like her on television.

"I know that if a child spends his life not seeing himself reflected in society, which mostly means on television, it will wear him down," she said.

Children's programs like "Sesame Street," she said, offer a feeling of belonging and positive role models to all children in our society.

They are particularly beneficial to low-income children whose families often lack other opportunities for intellectual stimulation.

The public broadcasting channel is the only source available for educational children's programming for about one-third of American families that cannot afford or do not have access to cable television. And I bet most Americans would be surprised to know that the majority of public television viewers come from families with annual incomes of less than \$40,000. It is the children in these families who gain the most from public broadcasting.

I do not mean to suggest that public television is a panacea. Clearly, we parents must take responsibility for turning off the television more often and monitoring the shows our children do watch. And we can do more as a society to help our families meet that challenge. A rating system and the proposed v-chip to block out violent programs from individual homes could make a difference.

But let's not kid ourselves. In a culture like ours, which is so dominated by television, children's programming is not a luxury enjoyed by a privileged few. It is a necessity for tens of millions of American families.

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TALKING IT OVER

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

RELEASE: WEEKEND, JULY 29-30, 1995

The first time I met Mother Teresa was not in an urban slum or a remote village in India but in the fancy ballroom of a Washington hotel. It was February 1994, and she had just delivered a speech against abortion at the National Prayer Breakfast. When she finished her remarks, she pulled me aside for a chat.

She told me about her homes for orphaned children in New Delhi and Calcutta and asked for my help in setting up a similar home for abandoned and neglected babies in Washington, D.C. I agreed to work on the project. Although we differ on some issues, we found common ground on adoption. So we sat and talked about how to find homes for the hundreds of thousands of American children who need loving families.

A year later, my daughter and I visited Mother Teresa's home for children in New Delhi. There were too many cribs and too few toilets, and there was too little space. There was no way the place could ever pass inspection in any American city. But there were also dozens of beautiful babies, mostly girls, being fed, clothed, sheltered and loved until they could be adopted.

These images stayed with me when I returned home. I was even more determined to help Mother Teresa bring to Washington the compassion I had witnessed in India. But you cannot imagine how much red tape was getting in my way. Ironically, many regulations designed to protect children often overlook what kids need most: love and attention.

Finally, on a sweltering day this past June, the Mother Teresa Home for Children opened in an affluent residential neighborhood of the nation's capital. It is a two-story Tudor house with a swimming pool in the backyard, donated by a remarkably generous person who chose to remain anonymous. At the dedication ceremony, Mother Teresa — happy, enthusiastic and all business — took me on a tour. Grabbing my hand and leading me up the stairs, she walked me through brightly painted rooms filled with cribs, bassinets and stuffed animals.

Although it will accommodate only eight children at a time, this home is a crucial step in awakening Americans to the crisis of adoption.

We should worry less about how many cribs can be placed in a room and more about how many children can be placed with loving families. And instead of yelling at each other about abortion, we should spend our energy making adoptions easier. If that were to happen, there would be far fewer abortions and far more children in happy homes.

Today, there are about 450,000 children in the United States who need permanent families. There are tens of thousands of parents seeking to adopt.

Yet every day, complex regulations, outdated assumptions and wrong-headed laws stand in the way of bringing these parents and children together.

For some Americans, like a woman who wrote to me recently, cost is the biggest barrier. She and her husband, both musicians, spent thousands of dollars adopting a little boy six years ago. He is, she said, "the joy of our life." When her cousin's daughter recently became pregnant at age 18 and could not afford to keep the child, this same couple volunteered to adopt again.

As simple as this case should have been -- the parents and baby were members of the same extended family and all parties agreed to the adoption -- it still cost upward of \$4,000 because of legal fees and paperwork.

For others, there is a fear factor. Like many Americans, a 40-year-old newscaster I met recently in New Mexico was interested in adopting but was discouraged by highly publicized cases like Baby Richard's. However rare they are, cases in which birth parents seek to reclaim custody of adopted children undermine people's faith in the adoption system.

Decisions to give up children for adoption should be difficult to overturn, especially in the cases of children who become attached to their adoptive families during their formative years, like Baby Richard. The decision to return the child to the biological parents or to uphold the adoption should be made as quickly as possible. No child should be left in limbo.

The whole process also is made more difficult because of a historical bias against interracial adoptions, which can mean endless waiting until children are matched with parents of the same race.

In a perfect world, most of us would choose parents who shared our cultural and racial identities. But our world is not perfect. Today, there are far more minority children needing homes than are being placed for adoption. To prevent these children from languishing in foster care, new guidelines are now in place that will prohibit federally funded agencies from using race as a factor in placing children.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we did something dramatic about adoption? Why not set a goal of placing 100,000 children each year for the next five years? To do this, we would have to make adoption easier and enlist volunteer lawyers and judges to speed up the legal process. And we should also follow Mother Teresa's model, in which considerations like money, regulations and skin color do not outweigh the more important gift of love that adoptive parents want to offer.

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