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BODY:

Thank you very much, Carolyn, for that warm introduction. And thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for the wonderful welcome you have given me. I'm glad to be here on this podium with all your officers, including Mayor Lashutka of Columbus. Did I pronounce that right? Close? Lashutka.

I just had the Nebraska football team over at the White House, and so I had a lot of practice pronouncing names this morning. [Laughter] The Nebraska football team are so big, that's the only group of people in America I could stand with and look like the resident ballet dancer. [Laughter]

Mayor James, it's good to see you here, and all the other mayors who are here, and all of the other representatives of the cities and towns of our country.

I like to come here and meet with you because you deal with people at the level where you can have the greater contact with them. When I was Governor, nothing was more important to me than actually being able to spend a lot of time with the citizens at the grassroots community level who were interested in solving the problems of people. And I've always said that one of the things I like most about the job I used to have and one of the things I like least about the job I have right now is that the closer you get to the people, the less political the work is, and the closer you get to Washington, the more political it becomes.

The most frustrating thing about being President is that I don't get enough time to speak with ordinary Americans in terms that they can understand about what we're trying to do up here. Although I must say, when I was driving up here today, I thought, these local officials may be out of touch, too. This is the most beautiful day we've had in Washington in 6 months, and here you are listening to a politician inside. [Laughter] I don't know.

You have the opportunity to see people struggling to keep the American dream alive everyday. And when you think of these issues, it must stun you at times what you hear in the news about what's going on up here, when it seems too rhetorical. Because I know when you think of these issues you know a name, you see a face, you know a life story. That gives meanings to the problems that we are dealing with. And I think Washington has suffered grievously from losing that connection, losing that touch with the people who sent us here, and trying to communicate with people from such a long way away over the mass media through so many millions of conflicting messages with high levels of rhetoric.

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I want to try to move back from that today and just to speak frankly about the choices that we face here and the choices that you face in doing your job and how we both can make the right decisions. As we stand on the edge of a new century and a new millennium, I think there are two great tasks facing America and our generation.

The first is to make sure that we enter the next century with the American dream alive and well for all of our people, for the middle class whose interests are so often forgotten, for those who are struggling to make it in the global economy, for all the poor people in this country who are working hard to play by the rules and to live up to their God-given capacity.

The second thing we have to do is to make sure we enter the next century making sure that America is still the strongest country on Earth, still the greatest force in the world for freedom and democracy and opportunity. There are two great threats to this endeavor. One is the stagnation of middle class economics. The other is the erosion of mainstream values.

And the third thing that I want to talk to you about is the fact that the Government has often made these problems worse, not better, in the last several years. so we have to ask ourselves, what can we do to restore middle class economics, the opportunity part of the American dream? And what can we do to restore mainstream values, the responsibility part of the American dream? And what kind of Government changes do we need here to make sure we're good partners with the American people where you live and work?

For the last 20 years, most people have worked the same hours or even longer hours, for the same or even lower wages. There is a new class of permanently poor people, mostly your women and their small children, and they're growing. And the anxieties of people are pronounced, economically. Even in this time of economic recovery, people worry about downsizing everywhere and whether they really count in the workplace anymore. And there is a huge inequality growing among our workers, where those with good educations and those capable of learning new skills tend to get good jobs with growing incomes and those without tend to be stuck in a rut forever.

We have all this good news. We had -- in 1993, we haven't gotten the '94 figures yet -- in '93 we had the largest number of new businesses started in the United States of America in any year in our history, and that's something to be proud of. But we also see people struggling just to hold on and to maintain their lifestyle, even though in many families both the husband and the wife are working and have less and less time to spend with their children.

On the social front, the values we all cherish, work and family and community, are threatened as crime and violence and drug use rises all across America. And even when it falls it's still too high. The rate of children that are born out of wedlock continues to go up. Our social problems, in many ways, seem more profound today than they have in a long time.

And you see the traditions of breakdown in family, community, rooted in a loss of allegiance to these mainstream values and a lack of opportunity. This is a dangerous erosion of the things that made America great and kept us strong for over 200 years.

We are now in the midst of a great debate here in Washington about what we ought to do about this. How can we make the good things more present and how can we reduce the bad things in America? How can we do the things we need to do to keep the American dream alive and keep our country strong? How we answer these questions will say an awful lot about what kind of people we're going to be and what kind of country we're going to pass onto our children in the 21st century.

There is on one side of the debate, on the extreme, the old and now discredited Washington view that a big, bureaucratic, one-size-fits-all Government can provide big solutions to all America's big problems and maybe to some of America's not so big problems.

The other extreme is the view of the Republican contract, that Government is the source of all the problems, and if we could just get rid of it completely or at least reduce the Federal Government's spending role, every problem in America would miraculously solve itself.

I have a different view, and it's probably rooted in the fact that I didn't live and work here until 2 years ago. My view is rooted in the fact that my experiences as Governor of a small State are much more like ours than they are like most of the people who make most of the decisions in this community. I think we have to chart a course between and beyond the old way of big Government and the new rage of no Government.

No great country can survive without National Government that in the information age is more limited but is still strong and effective. We do have, after all, common problems as people. We have common opportunities. And these require a common response. We need the Government, in short, to be a partner with people in their private lives as citizens, a partner with State and local government, a partner with all of us.

I believe in a Government that promotes opportunity and demands responsibility, that deals with middle class economics and mainstream values, a Government that is different radically from the one we have known here over the last 30 to 40 years but that still understands it has a role to play in order for us to build strong communities that are the bedrock of this Nation. That's what the New Covenant I talk about all the time is really all about, more opportunity and more responsibility.

Our job is to work together to grow the middle class, to shrink the under class, to expand opportunity and to shrink bureaucracy, to empower people to make the most of their own lives. We can't give any guarantees in this rapidly changing world, but we can give people the capacity to do for themselves. And we must do that; all of us must do it.

And finally we have to work to enhance security on our own streets and around the world. I believe, in short that the role of this Government is to be a partner in the fight for the future, not a savior -- it can't be that -- but not a spectator on the sidelines either. We've tried that, and it didn't work out very well.

We must face the fact that we live in a certain historical period in which the economy is global, the information age means that the basis of most wealth

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in the future will be knowledge, and that we can be far more decentralized and flexible than we ever have been before. No one will ever again have to rely on a distant bureaucracy to solve every problem in today's rapidly changing environment.

We have to focus on equipping people with the resources they need to tackle their own problems and to give people the responsibility to determine how best to do that. We have to send more and more decisions back, not only to State and local government but to citizens themselves.

We must cut spending. We must cut Government. But I believe we must also invest more in jobs, incomes, technology, education and training. That's what will make us wealthy.

I ran for President because I felt these challenges were not being met, because I felt that there was no economic strategy for putting our people first. We had 12 years of trickle-down economics in which the deficit quadrupled and our future was mortgaged. But we didn't invest in our people or our economy. We had both less opportunity and less responsibility. In Washington all I ever heard was the blame game. And it often reminded me of -- I felt often when I was out there in the country like you, like people must feel in a jury box, you know when two lawyers get in an argument with a judge over what they can say or not? All the jury wants to know is who did it. [Laughter]

And the American people, what they want to know is, what are we going to do? And are we going to do? And so I ran for this job because I was tired of a system in which both middle class economics and mainstream values were suffering. And the Government was doing well by special interest but not the public interest. I felt very strongly that we had to do something to stop the conditions in which most Americans were living, where people were working harder and harder and harder for less and less and less security. And I still believe that's what we ought to be about.

Now, we have begun to change all that. We have begun to change all that. And it required some pretty tough decisions, some of them were unpopular. Some of the people who made those unpopular decisions lost their seats in Congress last year, because people were told for years and years and years they could have a free lunch, that there were no tough decisions to be made.

Everything here operated at the level of rhetoric. We got down to business. They talked about cutting the deficit. We did, by \$ 600 billion. And we did it with over a quarter of a trillion dollars in spending cuts, with income tax increases on the wealthiest 1.2 percent of our people, with discipline -- not by the way, because I think that's good thing to do but because they were the ones best able to pay. And those were the people who were benefiting most economically from the economy.

And at the same, we were cutting 300 domestic programs. We were also providing tax relief for 15 million working families who were working at or near the poverty line to make sure that nobody who works 40 hours a week with children in their home should ever live in poverty. It's the biggest incentive to stay off welfare to know that if you work hard and you raise your kids, you're going to be able to make a living wage. These are the things that we worked on.

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Now, we eliminated or consolidated or cut about 300 programs. And in this new budget that I've got -- we'll talk more about that in a minute -- we propose to eliminate or consolidate 400 more. We reduced the size of the Federal work force in 2 years by over 100,000. And if no new laws pass -- [applause] -- thank you. If no new laws pass, the work force will be reduced over a 6-year period to its smallest size since John Kennedy was President. It will be 272,000 fewer people working here than on the day I was inaugurated President. I'm proud of that.

We have shifted power away from Washington to more responsibility for States and counties and cities and towns. The Vice President has lead our reinventing Government initiative, which has already saved the taxpayers \$ 63 billion and will save more. We've already cut regulations in banking and intrastate trucking and many other areas that make it now easier for businesses to create jobs and create opportunities. And we must do more, and we will. We've worked too hard to try to make it easier for you to do your jobs and to improve the lives of the people that we both serve.

Now, we've done a lot of other things, as well, that often get lost in the smoke around here. We passed the family leave law after 6 years of arguing about it. We passed the crime bill after 6 years of arguing about it. We expanded Head Start and provided for the immunization of all children under 2 by 1996. And we made lower cost, better repayment college loans available to 20 million young Americans so more people could go to college. We were busy around here in the last 2 years.

And along the way we were able to pass two major trade agreements, resolve major trade disputes with China and other countries, and expand trade by more than at any time in a generation. Very important when you consider the fact that low-cost goods from other countries come into our open markets if we have no trade agreements, but the trade agreements open markets for high value-added American goods and American services and American jobs all around the world.

I say this to point out how much different it is where you live than where we live. If you had done that, your voters would know it, right? [Laughter] An all the nay-sayers said, "Oh, if they put this economic plan in, it'll be the worst thing that ever happened to the country. The economy will collapse immediately. Everything will be terrible." Now they're all going to New Hampshire and giving the same speech all over again. [Laughter] I heard it for 2 years.

You know, since no country has permanent growth, if they keep predicting a recession, eventually we'll get around to it. [Laughter] They said, "Oh, this is a terrible thing -- if they pass this progrm, oh, it's terrible. The economy will just -- it'll be terrible."

Well, what's happened in the last 2 years? We've got the lowest combined rate of unemployment and inflation in 25 years because we took it on. Over 6.1 million Americans have new jobs in the last 2 years. That is a good beginning.

Now, having said all that, let's face the facts. You live with these folks, and you know as well as I do, there are still profound problems out there. Most people still have not gotten a raise. Every year more and more people lose

their health insurance even though they're in the work force. This is the only advanced country in the world that has a smaller percentage of people in the work force covered by health insurance in 1995 than it had in 1985. No other country can say that.

And we know these other problems are still with us. Half of all Americans are living on less money than they had 15 years ago. So we now have to focus not only on creating jobs but raising incomes and improving the security of working life and family life when people do the right thing. If we're going to strengthen the middle class and shrink the under class, we have got to do those things which will enable people to really feel the American dream. We've got to begin by equipping people with the skills they need to compete in today's economy. Even as we cut yesterday's Government, we must invest more in the education and training of our people. We must. We must.

We have tried to approach that work as the partner of people at the local level. Most folks around here think last year was the best year for education legislation passing through Congress in 30 years as we expanded Head Start and provided more funds for apprenticeships for young people who don't go onto college and made those college loans more affordable and wrote into Federal law the Goals 2000, the world-class standards for our schools.

But we changed the way we were making education law in Washington pretty dramatically. We didn't neglect our responsibilities to help create educational opportunity, but we didn't presume to tell the people at the grassroots level how to meet the standards as the Government had done so much in the past. Instead, we gave to local educators and to parents the power to decide how to meet global standards of excellence.

We said, here are some things that have to be done to improve our children's education. Here are things we'd like to do to help you do it. But you decide how to do it. In many ways, in dealing more directly with city government, our empowerment zones and enterprise communities are the embodiment of that kind of approach: to create opportunity, to shrink bureaucracy, to demand more responsibility, and then let you decide what you want to do with it and how you can best create jobs and opportunities.

We said to distressed communities, give us a comprehensive plan to create jobs, to revitalize neighborhoods, to bring the community together, to involve the private sector. Find the solutions together. The opportunity you get will be some cash money and tax incentives to encourage investment and resources to deal with other problems, like transportation or safety. And we'll cut the redtape so you can apply those resources as you see fit. This is a partnership between government, the private sector, and communities to encourage investment, to create jobs in places where too many people have been left completely behind.

If you think about it, our country has had major initiatives in the last several years to invest in Latin America, to invest in the Caribbean, to invest in all different kinds of places. They're fine. But this is the first major initiative we've had to get people to invest in America, to create jobs and markets and our best opportunities.

And by the way, I hope that before this session is over, we will see an expansion of that program, not a contraction of it, one that is paid for, one

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that is funded, but we ought to work to expand it, to involve more communities. We had hundreds of communities wanting to be involved in it who had good proposals that could not be funded.

We have to recognize that if we want people to live by the work ethic, there must be work for them to do. That also is something we should remember as we deal with the next issue that is coming in this session of Congress that affects some of you more than others, depending on how the system operates in your State, but all of you in some ways, and that is, how are we going to fix the welfare systems? I believe we should offer more opportunity in the form of education and work to people on welfare and then insist on more responsibility, requiring work after 2 years, tougher child support enforcement, responsible parenting. I've been working on this issue -- [applause] -- I've been working on this issue for 15 years now, and I know that Washington doesn't have all the answers and neither does anybody else, or we'd have solved it by now.

But we have done our best here to give more and more and more authority to conduct sweeping welfare reform efforts to the States. We have given 25 States waivers from the Federal rules and regulations to pursue welfare reform. Today we will give a waiver to Oklahoma, the 26th State to pursue a welfare reform proposal. That is more combined shift of power from the Federal Government to the States than occurred under my two predecessors, combined. I believe in this. I believe in this.

I know that the Government shouldn't dictate all the rules from Washington. On the other hand, I don't think we should give States welfare money without any standards at all. We do have a national interest in promoting work and responsible parenting, the reduction of out of wedlock births. We have a national interest in doing this.

Last year, I sent to Congress the most sweeping welfare reform plan ever proposed by an administration. It included the toughest possible child support enforcement. Let me just mention child support for a minute. Do you know if we collected all the money owed in this country by deadbeat parents, we could move 800,000 mothers and children off the welfare rolls immediately, 800,000.

Now, one of the things that we have reached agreement with the Congress on is that in this area there has to be some national standard setting, because 30 percent of these cases cross State lines. So even though we want to move decision back to the States, when the Governors came to town, they said, "Look, we know we've got to have some national action on child support and enforcement. Otherwise we can't ever collect on these orders that cross State lines. Justice should not depend solely on geography."

Reforming welfare is now a top priority for both parties, and that's good news. And we've worked together to find common solutions, and that's good news. We still have our differences. My plan and the one our administration has been behind for over a year now sends a clear message to young people. It says, take responsibility to turn your life around. Teen fathers must pay child support. Teen mothers should stay at home or in other appropriate settings, and they have to stay in school if they want to get a check.

But the Republican plan sends a different message at some points. It says, for example, if you make a mistake before you're 18, and you have a baby, you're

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on your own. No benefits for teenagers and their children who have babies before they're 18, until they turn 18, and then if the States want to keep them out of benefits forever, that's okay. I think that's a mistake. I think what we ought to be saying to people is, "You should not have done that." You make a mistake. We don't want anybody else to do it. But we're going to help you succeed as a student and a parent and a worker, and you have to help yourself by playing by these rules." I think that is a better approach. And I think it's in your interest.

Look, when people get -- if we just cut people off without putting them to work or keeping them in school, without making sure they have child care, if we just end all this, well, the Federal Government will save a little money. And you know what will happen, don't you? They'll be on your doorstep. They won't be part of some Federal statistic, and people say, "Oh, we're not spending money on that up here like we used to. We'll just give you the problem, and you figure out what to do with it."

Well, my own view is that just shifting the problem is not enough. Like many of the cuts currently being debated, I think it will ultimately be counterproductive. It will cost us more than we will save. The Federal Government, the cities, the States, the taxpayers all will pay more down the road if we do something that fundamentally undermines the health of our children, the future of our children, and our commitment to getting more Americans to live with the opportunities of middle class economics and the responsibilities of mainstream values. That's what I believe.

Now, yes, yes, we do have to continue to cut the deficit. We do have to continue to save money. My new budget cuts the deficit another \$ 81 billion and has over \$ 140 billion in spending cuts. And I want to work with the Republicans to do more. We have already reduced the rate of health care cost increases in the Federal budget over the next 5 years by \$ 100 billion. We have to keep working on the deficit.

But we have to do it in the right way. One of the things that the Republican leadership and I agree on is the line-item veto. We're about to take up debate on the line-item veto in the Senate. I hope it will pass quickly because it will give the President the opportunity and the responsibility to look at every single line item in the budget for waste. It will give us the chance to cut pork without hurting people. And that is an important distinction.

Let me give you an example of what I mean. Everybody knows we have to shrink the Department of Agriculture. Ross Perot had the best line of any of the candidates in the 1992 election. It grieves me to say that, but he did. [Laughter] Ross Perot had this great line where he said, "Did you hear about the employee at the Department of Agriculture that had to go see a psychiatrist because he lost his farmer?" [Laughter] And what he meant by that was, of course, that the number of farmers was shrinking and that technology and the modern world had reduced the need for some of the size and scope of organization of the Agriculture Department. So we all wanted to do that. Everybody knows we've got to save money.

One of the reasons I fought so hard for that GATT world trade agreement is so we could cut agricultural subsidies here without hurting our farmers in the global market. So my budget cuts agricultural subsidies, but now our competitors have to cut theirs more to give our people a fair break.

I'll give you another example. We wanted to cut the Agriculture Department, so we just closed 1,200 offices, 1,200. That's a lot of money. I do not think the way to cut the Agriculture Department is to freeze the school lunch program and send it to you, which means we're going to cut school lunches as the price of food goes up and the number of kids goes up. I don't agree with that.

And you cannot make me believe with all the poor kids in this world today and in this country who show up hungry to school every day, whose only decent meal occurs in school, you cannot make me believe that we cannot find a way to eliminate unnecessary spending from the Government budget without cutting the school lunch program. We can, and we will. We will.

I'll give you another example that affects a lot of you here. Some in Congress want to eliminate our community development bank initiative. Most of you probably have never heard of that, but let me tell you what it does. It's an initiative that would spend \$ 500 million to either establish or support banks that are set up in economically distressed areas, whose primary purpose is to get lower income people in high unemployment areas into the free enterprise system.

Now, I found out about this a few years ago when I was in Chicago, when I had a friend working for the South Shore Development Corporation. And we set up a community development bank in Arkansas when I was Governor that operated in a rural area, and it did amazing things. People got credit who could never get credit from any bank before, and they set up businesses, and they started working, and they started hiring people. And it changed lives for a lot of people in these communities.

So when I ran for President, I said here's a good idea that came out of grassroots America. We could put a little money in it and make a lot of difference. It is estimated that the \$ 500 million that we could spend on the community development bank initiative in your communities all over the country will generate \$ 22 billion in activity in the free enterprise system in places that have no enterprise today. So I think it would be a mistake to eliminate it. That's what I believe.

Believe you me, there's a lot of Government programs that don't have that kind of return. And keep in mind, what is the purpose of the Government? It's to empower people to make the most of their own lives, to enhance their security, and to help create opportunity as a partner. That's what this does.

I'll give you another example of the things that I don't think should be cut. Our national service project, AmeriCorps, is all about opportunity and responsibility. A lot of you have AmeriCorps projects in your communities. Young people get a helping hand with their college in exchange for helping people solve their problems at the local community.

Thousands of young people now are participants, as partners, as nurses, as teachers, working with pastors, working with police officers at the grassroots level. They walk police beats in Brooklyn. They build homes in Georgia. They fight fires in Idaho. But some people in the House want to cut this effort, to deny 15,000 young people the chance to participate in it. Now I've offered spending cuts, and I'll find some more. But I think it is a mistake to cut

AmeriCorps because it's a good deal. It gives us better citizens, stronger communities, more education for limited money. And it enables a lot of people to do things in their communities that simply would not get done any other way.

Ironically, one other area where we're having a big difference of opinion is in college loans. There's some in the Congress who want to severely limit the reach of the so-called direct loan program that we started which, believe it or not, lowers the cost of the loans to the students, cuts the time of paperwork and bureaucracy to the colleges, and saves money for the taxpayers because we get around the middle man. So here's one area where we can do more to send people to school for lower cost and actually save money. We've offered millions and millions of young people the opportunity to take these loans out and then pay them back as a percentage of their income.

But I want to emphasize that we've also been more responsible than Government was before. When I took office it was costing you as taxpayers, \$ 2.8 billion a year to pay tax money for defaulted loans. We have cut that \$ 2.8 billion down to \$ 1 billion. We've cut it by nearly two-thirds and made more loans available so people can go to college. That's the approach we ought to be taking. That is the way to save money on the program.

Now, one last thing in this area that I'm very concerned about, in the education area, and that is that one of the things in the House list of rescissions to cut is all the money for safe and drug-free schools that would go to 94 percent of the schools in this country. And that's very important to me, personally. I invested a lot of time in fighting the problem of drugs when I was a Governor. We have worked hard to get more investment to fight drugs in every area in which we fight it here, since I've been President. And we see disturbing signs that in parts of our population, among young people, drug use is going up again, more casual drug use, young people thinking, after a decade of it going down, that somehow it's maybe not dangerous anymore, forgetting that it's illegal. And a lot of our schools are still not safe because of the root problems of drugs and violence. Now this money gives schools the ability to hire police officers, to put up metal detectors, but also to have drug education programs, the programs like the D.A.R.E. program that so many of you have had in your schools and others that try and help these kids stay off drugs. I think it would be a mistake to cut this money out.

Let me remind you that this money got into the crime bill, which you worked so hard for, because I gave the Congress, for the first time, a plan to cut the size of the Federal Government by 270,000. So we didn't raise any taxes. We didn't take any money away from anybody. We shrunk the Government and gave the money to the communities of this country to fight crime, including the safe and drug-free schools money. We should not eliminate that. We should fight for it, not fight to cut it out.

As we are trying, you and I, to make responsibility a way of life in this country again, to teach young people the value of work, I think that all of us are going to have to say, first of all, without regard to our party, we agree with that.

Now that brings me to one other point I want to make beyond education. When I was a child, my mother used to say, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." You're going to have a whole lot more idle hands this summer if we cut out those

600,000 summer jobs for our young people. And is it worth it to deny 1,000 young people in Louisville or 1,600 young people in Boston -- I met with a young -- the Mayor's Youth Council up there not very long ago, 2,000 in the San Jose area. Is it worth it to deny them the chance to work, to be around responsible adults, to learn what it's like to sort of show up on time, put a day's work in, how you relate to other people at work? I mean, this goes way beyond the little amount of money you get out of this.

Now, I have proposed, I will say again, to consolidate 60 programs and eliminate 4,000 bureaucrats to save money in the Housing and Urban Development Department, for example. I have proposed to do a lot of things like that.

I told you about the Agriculture Department. We're coming with more. Hold on; every week, there will be more. I am not here to defend the way Government has operated in the past in Washington. But we have to make judgments here. We get hired to make judgments and the right decisions and not to throw out the baby with the bath water.

Take the HUD Department, for example, I'm all for -- I'm consolidating 60 programs. We're getting rid of 4,000 people. We're phasing the Department down. But I don't believe in the proposed cut to housing assistance that helps 63,000 families -- women with small children, low-income senior citizens.

What we ought to do is to look at the right kind of cuts. This whole rescission package does some interesting things. We're supposed to be passing responsibility back to you, but not undermining your ability to do your job.

I think it's smarter to streamline programs and cut bureaucrats than to put families on the street or to leave you to deal with the problem. Many of the people willing to pass you the buck are talking about ending unfair burdens on local government. I do want to say this: I think -- and the Speaker probably said this earlier today -- it looks like we may have an agreement now among all of the conferees and the administration and everybody on this unfunded mandate bill. I am very strongly in favor of that. It is a good thing to do. It's something we should do.

It is long since past time to stop imposing those mandates on you without paying for them. I spent a decade in the Governor's office in Arkansas, writing checks for decisions other people made. Now, I'm excited about that. That bill just passed the House a few weeks ago. It passed the Senate. It's a good, good thing.

But look at this: The rescission package that's moving through the Congress actually cuts off funds to help you comply with present Federal requirements, including safe drinking water, lead paint, and asbestos removal. So that makes them, I guess, not unfunded, but de-funded mandates. [Laughter] So we eliminate burdens on the one hand and create new ones on the other. I think that is an error.

Let me mention just one final area where we worked closely last year. We passed the crime bill after the people who were here before just talked about it for 6 years, played politics with it, and the rhetoric was so juicy on both sides they could never get around to passing a bill. That's what always happens, you know?

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Every one of these issues are tough. If they were easy, somebody would have done them. And you could pick either side and say it in a way that a majority is for you, right? I mean, you can. Are you for a balanced budget? Yes. Do you want to cut Social Security? No. [Laughter] See what I mean? So both sides win, right? Meanwhile, you're like the jurors listening to the lawyers' argument. Well, what's going to happen? Who did it? So we've got to work on this.

But I want to say this about the crime bill. We finally did that. And what we did largely was what was recommended by law enforcement officials and community leaders around the country: money for prevention with a lot of flexibility for people at the local level; tougher punishment, but help for States that would adopt tougher punishment, to build more prisons; and of course, more police, 100,000 more police on the street.

We did that because of two things. First of all, the law enforcement people said, we need more police. They also said they wanted a prevention fund. Secondly, we did it because of the evidence of what happens when community policing is properly instituted in the cities of our country.

From over about the last 30 years, the number of police in our country had grown by only about 10 percent, while the violent crime rate tripled. Clearly, there is a connection between those two statistics. And yet, still we've seen in place after place, where more police are put on the street in community policing modes, the crime rate will drop. That's why every major law enforcement organization supported that.

Now, the congressional bills and the crime bill are different from the House and Senate, but I ask you to look at the system we have now and the work it did, not only to catch criminals but to prevent crime. In New York City, the police commissioner implemented an aggressive community policing program that helped to significantly reduce serious crimes last year: auto thefts down 15 percent, robberies down 16 percent, murder down 19 percent. Not just in big cities: The mayor of Odessa, Texas, wrote to tell me that in 1991 and '92, they had a very high crime rate. Then they implemented community policing, and 3 years later, serious crimes have dropped a total of 43 percent. Union City, Tennessee, calls for help from the police went down by 30 percent and arrests went up by 35 percent with community policing.

That's why this crime bill was a partnership to help communities willing to take the responsibility to invest in their own security be more secure. An opportunity that is buried in redtape can hurt more than it helps. I don't know how many times I've seen little towns in my State have to hire consultants to figure out how to get Federal money, and it cut the margin of benefit dramatically.

What we did was to set this police program up so that cities and counties can apply directly to the Federal Government, using a one-page application with eight questions, awarding police resources directly to you. Now, I think that's a pretty good deal. I know one of those bills wants to add another layer to that. I don't think that's a very good idea, either. I think that we ought to have an opportunity for communities to apply directly and get the funds directly for law enforcement. My fellow Governors may disagree with that, but that's what I think.

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Now, in just the last few months since the crime bill took effect last fall, half the police departments in America have already received authority to hire almost 17,000 new police officers. We are ahead of schedule, and we're under budget. Some people who criticize our bill said that local governments wouldn't really want it; it was too much of a burden; it's an imposition; they can't afford to pay any match. All I know is, we have already received almost 11,000 applications representing over 60 percent of the police departments in America. Somebody thinks it's a good idea, and I think we ought to stay with it.

Here's the bottom line: The crime bill now on the books guarantees 100,000 new police officers. The alternative proposal doesn't guarantee a single one. We do give more flexibility and responsibility to you. Some of their proposals add bureaucracy and cut funds at the same time. So I say to you, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

We should never, never close the door to writing new laws that will make us more secure in the fight against crime. And it should never be a partisan issue again. I was sick when I got here 2 years ago and I realized they'd been fooling around with that crime bill for 4 years because each side could figure out how to gain rhetorical advantage. And small differences obscured large agreements. So I want to continue to work on this problem.

But this police initiative is a better deal for you and a better deal for the American people. And as I have said repeatedly, if necessary, I will veto any effort to repeal or undermine it.

But let me say this, what we need is not more vetoes. What we need is more action. What we need is for people here to behave the way you have to behave or you couldn't survive. Half of you come from places so small that if you made people declare their party every time they walked through the door to see if they got anything done or not, you'd be run out on a rail within a week.
[Laughter]

So, the veto is a useful device and an important thing on occasion. But what the country really needs is action. We need action. We need to remember these problems have faces, names, and life histories. We need to pull together. We're doing it on the unfunded mandates. We can do it on the line-item veto. We can do it on all these other areas if we will exercise simple common sense and recognize what our mission is. We've got to keep the American dream alive: middle class economics, mainstream values, jobs, incomes, work, and family. We've got to make sure this country stays strong.

And I'm telling you, it takes action, not just words. You live where the action is. If you don't do anything else while you're here, give us your energy and tell us you want action.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:02 p.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Carolyn Long Banks, president, National League of Cities; Mayor Greg Lashutka of Columbus, OH; and Mayor Sharpe James of Newark, NJ. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 1, 1995

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Public Papers of the Presidents

May 1, 1995

CITE: 31 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 744

LENGTH: 4585 words

HEADLINE: Remarks at a Kickoff Luncheon for a Women Voters Project

BODY:

That may be the best introduction I ever received, and if I had really good judgment, I'd just sit down. [Laughter] Thank you, Ellen Malcolm, Senator Mikulski, and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee, and to the Members of Congress who are out in the audience, my longtime friend Ann Richards. I met Ann Richards over 20 years ago. And I think she was living in a place called Lacy Lake View. And it was easy for me to see even then and even by Texas standards, she was a little bit larger than life. [Laughter] Humor and empathy, grit and grace, courage and decency, I respect her, and I envy her. Her jokes are always better than mine. [Laughter] And you'll all remember that she delivered one of the best political lines ever. It perfectly captured the mood of America. Do you remember? "Pass the Doritos, Marie." [Laughter] Didn't you always want to do one of those commercials? I did. [Laughter]

I'm also indebted to Ann Richards for another reason. She and Hillary went out to dinner last night, and by apparent happenstance, Julia Child was eating at the same restaurant. So the people, who were running the show decided that they should have everything Julia was having, plus whatever they ordered. According to my wife, anyway, they had a 10-course, 4-hour meal -- [laughter] -- after which they were wheeled out on gurneys. [Laughter] The good news is, I got home from New York last night about 1:30 a.m., and it was perfectly easy to get Hillary up to talk with me. [Laughter]

I want to say a special word of appreciation to Ellen Malcolm, for her vision and her work, her phenomenal energy have played an immeasurable role in electing more women to high public office in this country than would have been conceivable before she began her important work.

I thank her for her recitation of the work that our administration has done. We have tried to involve women at an unprecedented level. I notice when I started this administration, people were, even in some of the great establishment newspapers, they were always criticizing me for trying to have a diverse administration, as if there were something wrong with it. Well, I never had any quotas, and evidence of that is, we still only have only 44 percent of my appointees are women, but that's about twice as good as anybody else ever did, and I'm proud of that.

But I have always believed we could achieve excellence with outreach and effort, without quotas, and I always thought we had kind of a stupid quota system before. It was just never stated. There were just some things that weren't women's work. Now that's a quota system, and we paid for it. And our country's better off now that we're scrapping it.

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In the beginning, they used to criticize the judicial appointments process. But after 2 years, mercy, they looked up, and we'd named more judges in that time period than previous administrations and more women and minorities than the three previous Presidents, Democratic and Republican, combined. But the thing that was interesting and important to me is, we had the highest percentage of people rated well-qualified by the American Bar Association of any administration since they'd been keeping records.

So, under the leadership of Erskine Bowles, who is now my Deputy Chief of Staff, the Small Business Administration increased loans to women businesses by over 80 percent in one year. And they did it without reducing the number of loans to white males, and they did it without making a single unqualified loan.

We can do this, folks. The old system was the quota system. We need a system where everybody in America has a chance to serve and live up to the fullest of their God-given abilities.

Women's health is a terribly important issue to me. Ellen talked about it. My grandmother and my mother were working women and nurses. And this morning Hillary kicked off a new chapter in our campaign against breast cancer. The most important issue in women's health this week is the need to raise our voices in support of Dr. Henry Foster to be our Surgeon General.

He is a good man. He is a good doctor. He has spent his entire life delivering babies, bringing health care to people who wouldn't otherwise have it, training doctors to go out and help give health care to people who otherwise wouldn't have it, and spearheading a nationally televised -- nationally recognized program to reduce teenage pregnancy. It received one of President Bush's Point of Light awards. Henry Foster is a pro-life, pro-choice doctor who deserves to be confirmed as Surgeon General.

Henry Foster's record should be seen in the lives of thousands of babies that he has helped come into this world in a healthy way and the people he has tried to educate and the people he has tried to help. And he deserves to be more than a political football in the emerging politics of this season.

We are on the verge of a new century and a difficult and different time when everything is changing and everything, including our politics, is somewhat unpredictable. As we look into the next century, there's a lot to be happy about, the end of the cold war, the receding of the conventional nuclear threat, the emergence of the information age, and all the exciting possibilities of the global economy. But the great challenge of this age and the great challenge I predict to you of the next 50 is that all the forces that are lifting us up and opening unlimited possibilities to our children and our grandchildren, all the forces that are driving us toward a more integrated and cooperative world have a dark underside of disintegration. Because of so many of the things that are happening, we are lifting people up and seeing people beat down at the same time. There is great economic division in all the advanced countries. Why? Because more than ever before, education determines income and future prospects. So there is a great fault line in the great American middle class today which is responsible for a lot of the anxieties and a lot of the political issues and a lot of the divisiveness in our country. Those that have a good education are being lifted up; those that don't are being left behind.

More than half -- more than half -- of the male workers in this country are working a longer work week for a lower wage than they were making 10 years ago. That is a phenomenally important fact, not just economically but psychologically. All over America, men come home from work at night and sit down across the table with their families and know they're working as hard as they can, and they feel less secure, and they wonder if they've let their families down.

We have to do things that will change that. We have to bridge the economic divide and unleash the potential of all of our people. And the key issue there is education, constant, unrelenting dedication to excellence in education for a lifetime. It is necessary if we're going to bring this country back together.

We have these profound social divisions in our country. We have so much diversity now it is really a -- it's a gold mine for us. Ann Richards took the lead in trying to get the Congress to ratify the NAFTA agreement because she knew that we had to be more closely connected with other countries in the world and that our ethnic and racial diversity is a gold mine. But when people are frightened, it's easy to focus that fright on people who look different than we do or who think differently than we do about certain things. So there is this great social division: Will our diversity become a source of unity and strength, or will it be a source of our undoing?

And then there are deeper moral divisions that I want to talk about today which are most clearly manifested in the varying attitudes in this country toward violence. And it's something we're all living with in a very personal and human way because of the way we have shared the grief and outrage of Oklahoma city.

The condition of women in all three of these areas is profoundly important. And the response of women to all of these changes is important. As Ellen said, we've made a good beginning to try to help deal with these problems, to strengthen families and support incomes with the Family and Medical Leave Act. The earned-income credit this year will give the average family of four with an income of under \$ 25,000 an average tax cut of \$ 1,000. We have set in motion a plan under the leadership of Secretary Shalala to immunize all the kids in this country under the age of 2 by 1996. Those are important things.

This Congress of the last 2 years voted virtually to fully fund the Women, Infants and Children program to make sure that child nutrition and care for pregnant women was on the front burner. We have had dramatic expansion in our education efforts, from Head Start to apprenticeships for young people who don't go to college but want good jobs, to more affordable college loans for millions of people, to the national service program which has enabled young people to serve their communities and earn money to go to college. All these things are terribly important.

We have a future, economic agenda and a families agenda that involves raising the minimum wage, which I hope you will all support. Two-thirds of all the beneficiaries of an increase in the minimum wage will be working women -- working women.

There was a remarkable show on one of our television stations up here the

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other night, a news program on a little town south of here that had a lot of minimum wage workers. And they went and interviewed a woman working in a factory. And the news reporter said, "Now, you know, your employer says that if the minimum wage goes up that they'll either have to put more money in machines or they'll lose business. In any case, you might lose your job if the minimum wage is raised." And she looked at him and said, "Honey, I'll take my chances" -- [laughter] -- which I thought was the best one-line response I've seen on the news in a long time. If we don't raise the minimum wage next year it will be at a 40-year low. That is not my idea of what America should look like as we move into the global economy.

We ought to have welfare reform, but it ought to be the right kind of welfare reform. We shouldn't be punishing people for mistakes in the past. We should be giving them opportunity and imposing responsibility as they move into the future so people can succeed as successful workers and successful parents. It ought to be a work-based, parent-based strong program that lifts people up, not puts them down, basically just as a guise to save money. That is very important. You should be involved in the welfare reform effort.

And we should continue to invest more in education, not less. I say to the Congress over and over, we have two deficits, not one. Yeah, we've got a budget deficit, but we've also got an education deficit, and if we try to solve the budget deficit at the expense of the education deficit, we will be cutting off our nose to spite our face because we will lower the incomes of America and their capacity to pay taxes. So there are things we can do to deal with the economic divide where the fault line is education. And we are working to do things that will bring us together and to lessen these social tensions by lifting up everybody in their work and in their family life.

But we have to say that America has special problems which we have all begun to think more about because of the heartbreak of Oklahoma City, and that is violence. It has many forms. We live with it in our streets and our schools and our homes, where we work, where we live, where we play. Yes, we see it visibly if there is an action against a clinic where legal abortions are performed. But we also see it in some of our churches and synagogues. I never will forget being in Brooklyn one day with Congressman Schumer and driving by a synagogue with a big swastika on it -- in the United States in 1992.

We also see it, unfortunately, in our families. Violence can do a lot of damage in a country and it certainly has here. In Oklahoma City, we suffered a terrible wound because it was an act of terrorism. And as we mourn the dead and heal the injured, console the grieving and begin the rebuilding, we must also spare no effort to bring to justice those responsible. We must also understand that even punishing the guilty will not be enough if we cannot protect the innocent and the future. So I say to you my fellow Americans: I take a back seat to no one in my devotion to the Constitution. But we can protect the Constitution and our freedom and be tougher on terrorism in America, and we must.

I have sent to Congress a large number of suggestions that will strengthen our hand in dealing with this issue. And again, I urged them to act on it and act on it without delay. The stories you do not read in the newspaper are those that are most important -- the bombs that don't go off, the schemes that are thwarted before they succeed. And we must be better and better and better at

that. Whether terrorism is hatched abroad or within our borders, we must be better.

But we must also stand up against those who say that somehow this is all right, this is somehow a political act, people who say, I love my country, but I hate my Government. These people, who do they think they are, saying that their Government has stamped out human freedom?

Do you think -- [applause] -- I don't know if there's another country in the world that would, by law, protect the right of a lot of these groups to say what they want to say to each other over the short-wave radio or however else they want to say it, to assemble over the weekend and do whatever they want to do, and to bear arms, which today means more than the right to keep and bear arms, it may mean the right to keep and bear an arsenal of artillery. Is there a -- who are they to say they have no freedom in this country? Other countries do not permit that.

I plead with you -- do not lose your concentration on this issue. This is a big issue. Remember what I said earlier: The forces that are lifting up the world have a dark underside. What makes the global society work? What makes the information age work? Openness. Free movement. Low barriers to the transfer of people, ideas, and information. What does that mean? You can have a terrorist network on the Internet exchanging information about building bombs. What does that mean? You can build a bomb in one State and get in your truck and drive somewhere else freely and without being interrupted. What does it mean? It's easier to get into the country than other countries where you want to make mischief.

The open society is at more risk to the forces of organized evil. Don't forget about the people in Oklahoma City. Don't forget about their families. Don't forget about what they need to rebuild, and don't forget about what we need to try to prevent future incidents of this kind. Do not lose your interest in this issue as it fades into the past. We have a lot of work to do.

Let me also say that I hope that this incident will focus us a little more on the general problem of the extraordinary level of violence in our society, to find its common roots as well as to understand the differences in the different kinds of violence we have. I have to say this, and maybe it's an old-fashioned view, but I believe that it is innate in human nature that there is the capacity to do wrong and to harm others. And we are all balanced in different ways, subject to different forces. There are always excuses or reasons that can be given. I'm sorry for whatever terrible thing happened to the suspect in the Oklahoma City bombing case, but we have to stop making excuses and start thinking about what we can do to build a responsible, nonviolent society.

There is a lot of good news out there. I was in New York yesterday, where the crime rate has been going down for several years and where this year the murder rate is so far -- knock on wood -- more than a third below what it was last year. And this is happening all over the country. But violent crime is much higher today than it was a generation ago. There's been rising incidence of sexual assaults, muggings, homicides, some of it caused by street gangs, which themselves systematically terrorize law-abiding citizens in their area of operation, first in our inner cities and now spreading more and more to suburbs and to small towns.

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Increasingly, the victims of crime and the culprits alike are young people, even children. Today, believe it or not, there are thousands of children who stay home from school every day in America because they're afraid that violence will await them there. And even more children go, and learn about fear in their classrooms and hallways.

Sometimes the sole motivation for crime is hate or racial prejudice or extreme ideology. We've seen people killed and others wounded only because they were working at clinics. In the last decades we've been forced to acknowledge the full extent of reality about which we had long remained in denial which may not be able to be explained in terms of hate, racial prejudice, or extremist ideology, and that is the epidemic violence visited on women and children, often in the home.

I have known about this problem for a long time. I understand how it rips up family. Hillary and I were regular visitors at a shelter for battered women and their children when we lived at home. I have talked with abused children. I know that this problem of domestic violence is a difficult one. We have begun to be aggressive with it. America must be aggressive with it.

We see how much of crime among our young people is still due to drugs. And it's shocking to me that, for reasons that are not entirely understandable, as the economy has gotten better but some places have been left behind, casual drug use among some of our young people is going up again. This is a bad thing. We must speak against it. It will lead to more violence.

If you look at the profile of every penitentiary in the country, every Governor in America, including Ann Richards and Bill Clinton, every Governor in the country in the last 15 years has given speech after speech after speech about how tough we were on crime and how many prison cells we've built. If you go behind those bars you'll see them just full of people who basically had two problems. They had no education, and they were either addicted to drugs or alcohol. And so we continue to pay the price in violence and wrecked lives.

All of you have cared a great deal about making democracy work for all Americans. And you've done a good thing. And when we change our economic policy, when we broaden the doors of opportunities for people and permit more women and others who have been traditionally denied a chance to live up to their fullest capacities a chance to do it, we're all better off, and we're all strengthened. But when this country has the plague of violence we endure in so many ways, we are all weakened.

The most tragic thing outside the human loss in Oklahoma City itself to me was seeing the absolute terror that inflicted the lives of millions of American children who felt vulnerable, who felt that they somehow no longer understood what the rules were, didn't know if their parents could protect them, didn't know if right and wrong would reign in America.

So I say to you, we need to take a serious look at this whole issue of violence. We tried to address it in the crime bill last year with more police on the street because we know that that prevents crime, with the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill, with stronger sentences and prevention programs for our young people, and programs for drug education and prevention and treatment.

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We also understand that poverty breeds crime. That's why I worked so hard on the earned-income tax credit, to say that if you do work you shouldn't be still in poverty. We ought to reward work. The real heroes in this country today are people who are being pounded by this global economy, who are living in neighborhoods that are difficult, and still get up every day and go to work and raise their children the best they can, obey the law, pay their taxes, and try to make things work. They deserve economic policies and security policies that give them a chance to be honored for their work.

I do want to say again, though, we have to try to look deeper at the cause of the violence. Ellen mentioned that I recently appointed Bonnie Campbell, of Iowa, to direct our Office of Violence Against Women. And one of her most important jobs will be simply to educate the American people about the scope of this problem and what should be done and how to root it out. But our goal must be not just to punish people who do this but to stop it from happening in the first place, to change the spirit and the culture of America.

Yesterday -- or, excuse me, late last week, I met with Eileen Adams, another distinguished appointee at the Justice Department, who runs our Office of Victims Rights. And we honored people who spend all their time working with victims of crime. I met mothers who'd lost their children. I met a woman who had been victimized by a repeat sex offender who was released on parole, who molested her, poured gasoline over her body, set her afire, and left her to die. And this young girl, having literally had her body burned beyond recognition, and her brave mother have worked for more than a decade, after this child was maimed and blinded and burned almost beyond recognition, to put her life back together physically and spiritually. And now the mother and the daughter spend all their time trying to help victims of crime.

We must address what is causing the United States to commit the whole range of violence that we see. And none of us can escape our responsibility. We have to say: What do we expect from individuals? And we're not going to tolerate the defense that somebody else made me do it. What will families have to do? What will community organizations have to do? What must the churches do? What must the Government do? Where have we been wrong? What must the media do? And what must the culture do, the influence centers in our culture, the entertainment industry, the sports industry?

There have now been -- the Vice President told me this morning before I left to come over here, there have now been 3,000 studies on the relationship between violent behavior and exposure to violence through entertainment in ways that desensitize people to it, and they all show that there is a connection.

Now, that doesn't mean that we should have all movies and books without violence. This is a violent country. It's a part of real life. It doesn't mean they can't be exciting, but it does mean when we desensitize and deaden people to the reality of violence, we cannot be surprised when our children, who do not know right from wrong and are not as well developed as those of us who are older, have a desensitized reaction to their own conduct. So we must all say: What is our responsibility? We must all accept the fact that our words do have consequences. We must accept that.

We must ask, without pointing the finger of blame necessarily, we say -- do you say things or do things that either reinforce violent behavior, encourage

violent behavior, act as if at least it doesn't matter to you, or numb people to what it's really like? And what could we do to deal with this in a comprehensive way? We don't need to make this a political issue. We must not make it a partisan issue. But neither can anybody run and hide under the sheet and say, well, I didn't do this, that, or the other thing; therefore, what I did do was fine.

This horrible thing that has happened to us in Oklahoma at least imposes on us a responsibility to all examine the roots of violence in this country. We need not be more violent than other countries. We need not abuse our freedom so cavalierly. We need not snuff out more lives. But above all, if we do this, we can't be selective. We can't condemn one act of violence and condone another. That would be like trying to put out a fire by just watering one room and leaving the others to bum.

For too long, people, I think, have taken the easy way out and blamed violence only on the environment in which a person grows up. Well, that's, doubtless, true. But if that's true, why do most people who grow up in horrible environments turn out to be law-abiding citizens? Why do some people succeed against all the odds? Other people, because it lets them off the hook, just want to blame the individual and ignore the root causes. Well, if that's true, why are some groups of people so much more law abiding than others and so much less violent than others? We've got to set aside our preconceptions and our ideological baggage. And I say again, we don't need partisanship here; we need to look at violence with new and fresh eyes.

My administration has worked to make our country safer. It's worked to give more people the liberation of education. It's worked to make the economy stronger. And we can do more on all these fronts. But the thing that is driving violence in America is deeper than that, deeper than all these things.

So I ask you to work on this, to work on this with me. Yes, continue your passion for the cause of violence against women and children. Yes, continue your passion for the proposition that people who only perform legally under the law should not have their places of business born bed.

But be concerned about the political violence that makes people believe that they can literally claim to be political prisoners when they murder innocent children. And be concerned about the violence that grows out of our total insensitivity to the welfare of all these children who are growing up on the meanest streets in America. Be concerned about the violence that may at least be legitimized by the cultural forces and the daily words that all of us endure and sometimes enjoy.

We all have a role in this. This is a big issue. It will not be solved overnight. But it will be hard enough -- I will tell you again -- it will be hard enough for us to combat the forces of disintegration and organized evil into the 21st century if we are at our best. If we are at our best, it will be hard enough. If we continue to be insensitive to the role all the forces in our society play to the environment in which we operate, it may be a battle we can't win.

I honestly believe that the years ahead of us will be the most exciting, most productive, most rewarding years in all of human history, especially for people who historically have not been able to live up to the fullest of their capacity.

But to do that, we must -- we must -- root out this scourge of darkness within our country, and we can do it.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:02 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Washington Hilton at the 10th anniversary celebration of EMILY's List. In his remarks, he referred to Ellen Malcolm, founder and president, EMILY's List, and former Texas Governor Ann Richards.

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Public Papers of the Presidents

April 12, 1993

CITE: 29 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 572

LENGTH: 1272 words

HEADLINE: Remarks on the Preschool Immunization Proclamation and an Exchange With Reporters

BODY:

The President. This is a proclamation in support of Preschool Immunization Week. I'd like to read a statement about it, and then I'll be glad to answer some questions, along with Secretary Shalala who also has a few remarks to make.

This proclamation in support of Preschool Immunization Week gives us all a chance to promote our best ideals in the Nation and to prove that we can make a difference in the lives of our children. In fact, the \$ 300 million in our stimulus program will help us to immunize one million children this summer and to show that this is a campaign of words and deeds.

Studies under all administrations have shown that vaccines are the most cost-effective way to prevent human suffering and to reduce the economic cost that result from vaccine-preventable diseases. But because we've gotten away from preventive care and because immunizations have become unaffordable or unavailable, millions of infants and toddlers are at risk of completely preventable diseases like polio, mumps, and measles. Children like Rodney Miller, a 20-month-old in Miami who had meningitis that could have been prevented with a vaccine that costs \$ 21.48, instead had a hospital stay that cost in excess of \$ 46,000.

Through public investment and leadership we can do better. It's a miracle of our system and our ingenuity that we can prevent the worst infectious diseases of children with vaccines and save \$ 10 for every \$ 1 invested. But things started to go sour in the eighties. We had the third worst immunization rate in this hemisphere. Ten years ago, immunizations cost \$ 23. Now they cost \$ 200. We're the only industrialized nation that does not immunize all children, although we develop and produce a majority of the vaccines. As a result, we've had thousands of new cases of measles. Immunization rates have not improved, and in the case of some, diseases have actually gone down. We have seen and predict what this will mean in terms of suffering and human costs.

Our plan will allow us to purchase vaccine and conduct outreach programs in the appropriate language and at the appropriate neighborhood venues, to reach those who'd been shut out of this part of our system. It will allow us to extend clinic hours, expand education efforts, create a national tracking system so that we know what's happening to our children. It will give us the resources to help those in the public health system and in advocacy groups who are already working heroically to bring this simple technology to all of our children.

Today we will begin what will become, with later legislation, a comprehensive

program to support community based immunization projects and to lower vaccine costs with the goal of having the best, not the worst rate in the hemisphere. There are great coalitions working on making this effort successful and fun and a model of what we can do again to make this Government work.

I just want to say that today we're having the Easter egg roll on the White House lawn. You can look out there at those kids. They are the hostages of the Senate filibuster on the program. They are the hostages of the Senate filibuster on the stimulus program. All this hot air rhetoric about how this money is being wasted and that money is being wasted. These people, most of them have been here for the last 12 years while we have run immunization into the ground, while we have developed the third worst rate in the hemisphere. And they've always got some excuse, some of them, for not doing anything.

Now, what are we going to do for those children? That ought to be the question of the week. When I go out there on the lawn, and I think about those kids picking up Easter eggs, I want to be able to think about them all being immunized and all those children coming along behind them being immunized. There is no excuse for this. And it is time that we broke the gridlock and stopped making excuses for not doing anything.

Secretary Shalala.

[At this point, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala spoke about the importance of the preschool immunization program.]

The President. Thank you.

Stimulus Package

Q. Mr. President, in order to save the \$ 300 million immunization program, are you prepared to compromise with the Republicans in the Senate to scale back the stimulus package to something a lot less than you had originally hoped for?

The President. Well, I think, I'd like to know how many more Americans they want to keep out of work. I mean, what is their position? That's basically what it amounts to. I mean, all this business about there being the potential for abuse in the community development block grant program, that is a smoke screen, and this is politics. So they're going to have to decide. I want to put as many people to work as I can. They're going to have to decide how many people they're determined to keep out of work. And I'll do everything I can to pass the best bill I can.

But let's not talk about compromise. Let's strip all this rhetoric away. This is about whether you want to reduce the unemployment rate in America by another half a percentage point for a very modest amount. And they don't. For whatever reason, they don't. They want more people to stay out of work. So they just have to decide, I guess, how many people we can put to work and what we can do. And I'm going to do the best I can to get the best program I can. I'll be discussing it this week.

Whenever we use the word compromise, let's talk about what's really at stake. The Republicans had 12 years in which unemployment went down only when they were exploding the deficit and increasing the defense budget. Now we're reducing the

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defense budget. What is it that we propose to replace it with? We must have some investment. We must have some jobs. We must have primarily the overall program that we've already passed. But I think we need to strike a match to the job engine in America, and that's what I'm trying to do. And I'll do the best I can. I'm going to create as many jobs as I can.

Q. Well, Mr. President, what are you prepared to do to make sure that your program gets through Congress?

The President. We're working -- look, we've got a majority in both Houses. The American people, I think, are astonished to find out that 41 Senators, 41 percent of the Senate can shut the whole place down. And they've just got to decide, as I said, how many people they want to keep out of work and how many people we want to put to work. And I think we can work something out. I'm hopeful that we can. I know that there are people in that Republican Senate bloc that want to vote for a good stimulus program. I know they do. I hope they'll be released to do it.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, have you rejected the recommendation of your commission that force be used in Bosnia?

The President. I saw that story. That commission has not made a report to me yet. We didn't ask anybody not to talk to the Congress. We just asked that policy recommendations not be made to the Congress before a commission that came out of the executive branch made final recommendations to me. We have not received a final report from them.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:07 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Proclamation 6542, National Preschool Immunization Week, 1993, signed April 9, was published in issue 14 of the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 14, 1993

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Public Papers of the Presidents

February 12, 1993

CITE: 29 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 196

LENGTH: 2392 words

HEADLINE: Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters at the Fenwick Center in Arlington, Virginia

BODY:

The President. Thank you. We are delighted to be here today. I want to thank all of you for hosting us and coming out in such wonderful numbers, and I want to especially thank the young people who are here.

I want to begin my introducing the First Lady, my wife, Hillary. As many of you know, she is the chair of the President's Task Force on Health Care and came today to review the work of this wonderful clinic in anticipation of our presenting to the Congress a program to provide affordable health care for all Americans in the next several weeks.

We've had a wonderful time here today. And I want to introduce the person to my left who will speak in a moment, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala. I also want to introduce two United States Senators who came with us today: first, the chair of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts; and Senator Don Riegle of Michigan.

I'd like to thank Jim Hunter, the Arlington County Board chair, for meeting us here. I know we have members of the Virginia Senate and House here, and the school board chair, Frank Wilson. I thank all of them for being here. But the two people I'd like to thank most today are the two fine public servants who showed us around. I'd like to ask them to stand and be recognized: Dr. Susan Allan, the Arlington County health director -- where is Susan? -- and Sue Adams, the Family Health Bureau chief. Thank you, Sue.

We've had a wonderful time today. We got to walk through the process of what it was like for a parent to have a child immunized here. We saw the good news, which is that this place is doing a wonderful job of reaching people. We also saw some of the bad news, which is it's still pretty cumbersome to have a child immunized. And we did get to see a young woman of 20 months, get her a polio vaccine, which is an oral vaccine. So it was nice to see someone be vaccinated without pain. [Laughter]

We came here today to make this day a landmark and to fight to protect the health of millions of our children. I can think of no better place to announce a new immunization policy than right here on the front lines of the fight to provide accessible, affordable health care to every family in this area.

I'm pleased to be joined here by the children's advocates whom I have introduced. And I do want to say again our thanks to Sue Adams, the director of

this clinic, and all the wonderful staff that came out and said hello to us and encouraged us along the way.

This week I was startled to read of the case of a young boy named Rodney Miller, a 20-month-old child who lives in Miami, currently being treated for meningitis in the Jackson Memorial Hospital. He's there because he did not receive a meningitis vaccine that cost \$ 21.48. The bill for his stay in the hospital has already topped \$ 46,500.

In the health care policy that our national task force is developing, nothing will be more important than preventive care. Today, American taxpayers are being hit with \$ 10 in avoidable health care costs, avoidable health care costs, for every \$ 1 we could be spending on immunizing our young people. The recent resurgence of measles in our country afflicted over 55,000 people, most of whom were children. The epidemic cost this country \$ 20 million in avoidable hospital costs alone. Prevention would have cost \$ 1 million. And those figures don't begin to take into account the terrible human cost, the agony of a young man like Rodney Miller with his joints swollen, with his ankles so swollen they have to be relieved with needling to get the pus out, that the pain and problems that he and many others will take throughout their lives simply because we don't immunize our children.

Lest you think that this is a problem that every country has, I want you to know in this beautiful health care building that the United States has the third worst immunization record in this hemisphere. Of all the nations in this hemisphere, only Bolivia and Haiti have lower immunization rates for their children than the United States of America.

Over the past 10 years, while immunization rates have been declining in many important areas, the price of vaccine has risen at 6 times the rate of inflation. Immunizing a child cost about \$ 23 10 years ago; it costs more than \$ 200 today. In a public clinic, the cost of fully immunizing a child has leapt from \$ 7 to more than \$ 90. Manufacturers of these vaccines cite the cost of research and development to defend the rising prices. Well, nobody wants research to slow down, but let's look at what's really happening.

The pharmaceutical industry is spending \$ 1 billion more each year on advertising and lobbying than it does on developing new and better drugs. Meanwhile, its profits are rising at 4 times the rate of the average Fortune 500 company. Compared to other countries, our prices are shocking. Listen to this: The polio vaccine in the United States currently costs close to \$ 10. In England, the same drug is available for \$ 1.80. In Belgium, it costs 77 cents. The problems of having an adequate delivery system, plus the spiraling costs, are putting America's children and America's future in jeopardy.

To make matters worse, the makers of these vaccines have refused to make their products available to States at more affordable cost. I should tell you, those of you who don't know, that the Federal Government buys vaccines from the manufacturer and distributes it through the States and ultimately the people through the Center for Disease Control. We buy the vaccines at a much lower cost than a doctor can. The States often directly buy vaccines. They buy the vaccines at a higher cost than the Federal Government, but still at a lower cost than doctors. States can order large quantities and therefore should receive lower prices.

But listen to this: While 10 States have succeeded in negotiating agreements with the vaccine manufacturers that allow them to immunize all the children they can reach, manufacturers are now balking at starting talks with other States. In fact, just recently Texas, South Carolina, and Hawaii were all turned away. They were told that their efforts to get cheaper vaccines for their children were against public policy.

Today we must tell the drug companies to change those priorities. We cannot have profits at the expense of our children. These practices have got to stop.

But I want to make it clear: Dealing with the cost of vaccines will not be enough. We also have to improve the delivery of preventive care. I want to say to the members of the press and to all the people who are here, we should be under no illusion that every family and every child in America has access to a health clinic as good as this one. We should be under no illusion that every family and every child in America has access to a health clinic that opens at 7 a.m. in the morning and closes at 7 p.m. at night so that working families can bring their children.

Even here, where there has been a dramatic increase in the number of children immunized, we are still seeing rates of 70 percent immunization when the national goal, and what is necessary to assure that there will be no outbreak of communicable diseases, is 90 percent. Without an outreach program to go out and reach people where they are, in the languages they speak, in the homes and in the neighborhoods and in the organizations that they frequent, we will not be able to reach this goal.

So today, I am announcing a three-part policy to protect our children's future and to save the taxpayers millions of dollars. It will require changes on the part of all of us. And as I have in the last 3 weeks, I want to begin with the Government so that we do our job first before we ask anyone else to change what they are doing.

I am pleased to announce that the job stimulus program that I will outline on Wednesday evening to the Congress will include \$ 300 million to make vaccination services more widely available to all Americans. These funds will help public programs buy more vaccines. They will improve community services and personal outreach efforts. They will mean extended clinic hours all across America, more staff, and increased education efforts in conjunction with the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services, and the resources necessary to create a national tracking system so we know what is happening to these children. These folks here are having a terrible time getting good and accurate records because we don't have a national tracking system.

These are the kinds of things that the National Government owes the American people and owes these fine public health professionals if we're going to do what we should be doing to help protect our children. And we will begin with that.

Second, I'm directing Secretary Shalala to begin negotiations with our drug manufacturers to assure that other States who do not have the arrangements that 10 do can buy the vaccines they need at affordable prices. There is no reason in the world why a child in Texas is unable to receive vaccination while a child in Massachusetts can. We can't stand this kind of inequality simply because of the economic priorities of the manufacturers of the vaccine. It's wrong.

Finally, the administration will prepare an initiative for my review in cooperation with key congressional health leaders, such as Senator Kennedy, Senator Riegle, Senator Bumpers, Senator Pryor, Congressmen Dingell Waxman and others that will guarantee the immunization of every child in America.

And I want to challenge the manufacturers of these vaccines to work with us. We cannot possibly justify financing research and development in future vaccines based on prices that will assure that children will not receive the vaccines that are available today. We can do better than that, and we have to.

Our Nation is the only industrialized nation in the entire world that does not guarantee childhood vaccination for all children. It ought to be like clean water and clean air; it ought to be a part of the fabric of our life. Look at these children. We should not risk losing one of them, and we should not waste one dollar on our already over-bloated health care system, that we could do away with vaccinations.

The cruel irony is that we are the Nation that develops and produces the majority of the world's vaccines. But we don't have an effective or an affordable mechanism for distributing them, and we charge more for vaccines in this country than are charged in other countries for the same vaccines that are manufactured here. That is an irony that we cannot permit to continue.

So the steps we've taking today will go a long way towards solving that dilemma. We'll make sure that excessive profits do not stand in the way of children's health. And I want you to know that we will not stop until preventable childhood diseases no longer threaten the families, the children, and the future of the United States.

[At this point, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala spoke.]

Thank you very much. Thank you very much. We're going to shake hands, but I promised the press we'd answer a couple of questions. Does anybody have one? Where are they? I was listening for a familiar voice. Go ahead.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us what you hope to achieve? What makes you think that the health costs --

The President. Well, for one thing, there has been -- the drug companies are used to selling drugs on a bulk basis at a discount rate to the Federal Government and to some of the States. I think that the position they have taken, that we should continue the status quo, is untenable. But if they have legitimate arguments on research and development, maybe there's some other ways we can try to address those.

I think we ought to let Secretary Shalala and the White House folks meet and deal with them and see what position they take. I cannot believe that anyone seriously believes that America should manufacture vaccines for the world, sell them cheaper in foreign countries, and immunize fewer kids as a percentage of the population than any nation in this hemisphere but Bolivia and Haiti. I can't believe that that is their position. But that is the inevitable consequence of what we have not done.

Public Papers of the Presidents, February 12, 1993

Yes?

Q. -- Congress is going to go along with any --

The President. Well, I'm going to present a program to the Congress to provide for the immunization of all children at a reasonable price. I hope they will be a part of developing that program. Whether they are or not is up to them. But this is unconscionable. We are running the risk of new epidemics spreading out in this country. We cannot do it. We were supposed to have 90 percent of our kids immunized in 1990. That's what Dr. Koop wanted when he was Surgeon General. We missed the deadline. They put it off to the year 2000. And unless we do something about the delivery system and the price, we're not going to get there in the year 2000. I want to get there sooner, and I think we can. I believe they'll be a part of this. I think the public outpouring on this is going to be so strong that they'll come along and do it.

I'm still going to try to pass a bill that will permit us to immunize all the children of the country.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Well, let me say in my State the public health department does 85 percent of the immunizations done. I'm very proud of that. And there are a lot of Southern States that, because of our legacy of poverty, have had to develop very elaborate public health networks. So this is something that we've been sensitive to for a long time.

I've also been interested in buying the vaccinations. But everything that I've done on public health since -- well, ever since we got into public life, Hillary's been a part of. So she's been pushing this, but so has Secretary Shalala. I don't know who to give credit to. But I don't care who you give credit to, as long as we get it done.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:07 a.m. at the Arlington County Career Center.

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LOAD-DATE: March 12, 1993

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HHS NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, April 1, 1993

Contact: CDC Press Office
(404) 639-3286

The Clinton Administration today announced its proposed "Comprehensive Child Immunization Act of 1993," which HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala called "a turning point in our efforts to have every American child properly immunized by 2 years of age."

The legislation will be introduced in the Congress by Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Representative John Dingell, Senator Donald Riegle, Representative Henry Waxman, Representative Louise Slaughter, Representative Eva Clayton and others.

The President's comprehensive initiative would build on the Administration's plans to improve the nation's immunization delivery system this year and in 1994. President Clinton's economic stimulus package includes \$300 million for this year to strengthen the immunization system, especially through increased funding of community "Immunization Action Plans" in 87 cities and counties throughout the country.

The Presidential initiative announced today provides for a nationwide immunization tracking system, through state registries, to help ensure that all children receive appropriate immunizations at the recommended ages. It also would establish a federal universal vaccine purchasing program beginning in 1995, to ensure that all American children are immunized on schedule. The universal purchase system would be phased-out as immunization services for all

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children become available as part of the broad based reform of the nation's health care system.

"This initiative embodies the President's commitment to ensure proper immunization for all American children," Secretary Shalala said. "This is a sound and cost effective investment in America's future health and productivity. And it is an essential first step towards a national health care reform plan that will emphasize prevention and guarantee families the security of health care coverage."

Other provisions of the legislation would reauthorize the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, and would provide for outreach to parents and others, including improved and easier-to-understand informational materials.

Federal funding to establish the state tracking registries is estimated at \$275 million for fiscal years 1995 and 1996. The annual cost for universal purchase of vaccines is estimated at \$1.1 billion in FY 1995.

HHS FACT SHEET

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

April 1, 1993

Contact: CDC Press Office
(404) 639-3285

"COMPREHENSIVE CHILD IMMUNIZATION ACT OF 1993"

The President today sent to the Congress the "Comprehensive Child Immunization Act of 1993." When enacted, the bill will help ensure that all children in the United States are protected against vaccine-preventable infectious diseases by their second birthday. This legislation inaugurates a new collaborative partnership among parents and guardians; health care providers; vaccine manufacturers; and federal, state, and local governments to protect our children from the deadly onslaught of infectious diseases.

This legislation would:

- o beginning in fiscal year 1995, authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to purchase and provide childhood vaccines in quantities sufficient to meet the immunization needs of children in the United States;
- o establish a national immunization tracking system, through grants to the states to establish state immunization registries, to ensure that children receive their scheduled immunizations at the earliest appropriate age;
- o ensure that the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, an essential link in our nation's immunization system, remains operational; and
- o continue vaccine infrastructure enhancements started in the President's economic stimulus program.

Background

Immunizations represent one of the most cost-effective means of disease prevention. Although federal support for childhood immunization has been in existence since 1962, the full potential of immunizations remains to be achieved.

Approximately 80 percent of vaccine doses should be received before the second birthday in order to protect children during their most vulnerable periods. Unfortunately, many children do not receive their basic immunizations by that time. In fact, in some inner city areas as few as 10 percent of 2-year olds have

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received a complete series. This low level of immunizations has been reflected in recent years in outbreaks of measles among unimmunized preschool children. The resurgence of measles in 1989 through 1991 afflicted over 55,000 people and cost the country \$20 million in avoidable hospital costs alone.

In 1982, the recommended vaccine schedule cost \$6.69 in the public sector and \$23.29 in the private sector. By 1992, the total cost for fully immunizing a child was \$122.28 in the public sector and \$244.10 in the private sector.

Legislative Proposal

The problem posed by rising vaccine costs is exacerbated by the deteriorated immunization delivery system. This legislation continues the rebuilding of our capacity to deliver vaccines and to educate parents. With this bill, our nation's vaccine infrastructure will continue to be revitalized, including delivery, safety and research capacity, patient and vaccine tracking ability, and a community-based outreach and information campaign.

To remove the financial barriers to immunization that impede children from being vaccinated on time, and to facilitate development of a national tracking system, the legislation includes federal purchase of all vaccines recommended for universal use in children.

Universal Vaccine Purchase and Distribution Provision

The bill would require that the Secretary consult with other federal agencies for advice on the quantities of recommended childhood vaccine to be purchased. It would authorize the Secretary to consult with representatives of state governments, experts in vaccine delivery, health care providers, and other experts prior to commencing negotiations for the purchase of vaccine.

This proposal would direct the Secretary to negotiate a reasonable price with manufacturers participating in a procurement. The price would be based on data supplied to the Secretary by manufacturers regarding (1) costs related to research and development, production, distribution to states and health care providers, and marketing; (2) profit levels sufficient to encourage future investment in research and development; and (3) the ability to maintain adequate outbreak control. In addition, the bill would require that data provided to the Secretary be treated as a trade secret or confidential information for purposes of the Freedom of Information Act and would provide criminal sanctions for violations of this provision.

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Under this legislation, the Secretary would provide (either directly or through the states) for the free distribution of vaccines to health care providers who serve children and are located in a state that participates in the state registry grant program. In non-participating states, free vaccine will be distributed to federal health care providers, community health centers, migrant health centers, health centers serving residents of public housing or the homeless, other federally qualified health centers, and health care providers serving Indians pursuant to the Indian Self-Determination Act or section 503 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.

The legislation stipulates that health care providers could not charge patients for the cost of the vaccine, but may impose a fee for its administration unless such a fee would result in the denial of a vaccine to someone unable to pay.

Finally, the bill provides that the authority of the Secretary established under this legislation to purchase and provide vaccines shall cease to be in effect beginning on such date as may be specified in a federal law providing for immunization services for all children as part of a broad-based reform of the national health care system.

State Immunization Registries

The bill provides for a collaborative federal and state effort to track the immunization status of the nation's children. It authorizes the Secretary to make grants to states to establish and operate state immunization registries containing specific information for each child in the state. Entering infant birth data into registries will enable the identification of children who need vaccinations and will help parents and providers ensure that children are appropriately immunized.

Providers would be required to report to the state tracking registry (or to the Secretary if there is no state registry) information regarding each vaccine administered and their periodic estimates of future vaccine needs. For each child, information will be gathered on immunization history, including types and lot numbers of vaccines received, health care provider identifiers and adverse reactions associated with the immunizations. In addition, the state immunization registries will provide vital information on safety and efficacy of vaccines by linking administrative records with adverse reactions reporting and disease outbreak patterns.

The National Vaccine Compensation Program

Another important element in the nation's vaccine immunization effort is the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program. This proposal would reauthorize this program. In addition, it would

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provide for a permanent extension and reinstatement of the vaccine excise tax and repeal the Internal Revenue Code provision that authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury to terminate the vaccine excise tax.

Other provisions related to the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program state that any vaccine recommended for universal administration to children by the Secretary would be included on the Vaccine Injury Table. The bill would provide the Secretary authority, with respect to any vaccine so added, to modify the Table, but only in accordance with notice, hearing, and comment procedures, and other limitations. The chief special master would be allowed to suspend proceedings on petitions from retrospective claims for up to 30 months, rather than the 540 days (or 18 months) in current law.

Finally, vaccine information materials now required to be provided to parents would be simplified by replacing the detailed list of items that must be addressed in the information materials with a requirement for a concise and understandable statement of the benefits and risks of the vaccine, and the availability of the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.

For the purpose of making state registry grants, the bill would authorize appropriations of \$152 million for fiscal year 1995, \$125 million for fiscal year 1996, and \$35 million for each of the fiscal years 1997, 1998, and 1999. In addition, the bill would authorize appropriations of such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 1993 and 1994 for start-up costs associated with activities to implement the Comprehensive Child Immunization Act of 1993.

Beginning in fiscal year 1995, the bill would authorize the Secretary to carry out the program of vaccine purchase and distribution from the Comprehensive Child Immunization Account in the United States Treasury. The estimated cost of universal vaccine purchase and distribution under the bill is \$1.1 billion in FY 1995. The sources of revenue that will be deposited into the Comprehensive Child Immunization Account for the vaccine purchase and distribution program will be identified in legislation for broad-based reform of the national health care system when it is submitted to Congress by the President in May.

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June 30, 1995

Tod Lindberg
Editorial Page Editor
The Washington Times
3600 New York Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Mr. Lindberg,

We are submitting the enclosed op/ed on the Vaccines for Children program in response to your June 27th editorial, "The vaccine boondoggle."

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is an organization of 48,000 pediatricians dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) represents the directors of public health in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Territories and Possessions.

If you have any questions concerning our article, we can be reached at the phone numbers listed below. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

George D. Comerci, M.D.
President
American Academy of Pediatrics
(502) 749-3133 (home and work)

Christopher G. Atchison
President
Association of State and
Territorial Health Officials
(515) 281-5605 (work)

FREE VACCINES: A SOUND INVESTMENT

The only vaccine boondoggle we see (June 27 editorial) is the proliferation of yet another misunderstood interpretation of the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program that does a real disservice to the solid commitment of both the public and private medical communities in making this program work efficiently and effectively. Since the editor seems to be in search of people outside the Clinton Administration "...to say something complimentary about the VFC program," we say BRAVO! on behalf of ourselves, but even more importantly, on behalf of the nation's families and children. It's past time to set the record straight.

For the record, it was President Dwight D. Eisenhower who pledged after the polio vaccine was licensed, that all children would be vaccinated, regardless of their ability to pay. He clearly recognized and understood that childhood immunizations were a public health issue and that the best defense against disease was a strong offense based on age-appropriately immunized children. We didn't get the health reforms needed to guarantee children and adolescents private health insurance coverage that included all recommended immunizations. As a result, President Clinton picked up the ball and legislation was enacted to protect them from preventable diseases in the interim. Again we say, BRAVO!

Reason has given way to insanity when we are arguing on the editorial pages about whether or not cost is a barrier for families getting their children immunized. As a nation we have followed Eisenhower's lead and recognized that it is, by already having in place, prior to VFC, policies that entitle all children to free vaccines. For the General Accounting Office (GAO) to state otherwise is missing the point. The issue at hand is not whether all children will continue to be entitled to free vaccines, but where they will have to go to get

them.

Had GAO talked to us and to parents, they would have uncovered what this program is really all about. It's about allowing families to stay in their medical home and receive immunizations as part of their ongoing, comprehensive preventive care for their children. There is no logical reason to fragment this care and create more obstacles in obtaining immunizations. Immunizations delayed, for whatever reason, are immunizations denied.

The 95 percent immunization rate for children entering first grade cited by the editor is laudable, but misleading. You see, this statistic doesn't take into account that children must follow an immunization schedule that begins literally as soon as the child is born. To play catch-up before entering school, is a weak offense, putting many children unnecessarily at risk of life-threatening disease. It is for our children under age two that the United States lags far behind other countries. And for this we all pay, in terms of hospitalizations, lifelong disabilities, special education requirements, loss of young lives or unnecessary human suffering.

The VFC program is only part, but an important part, of this nation's immunization policy. It doesn't solve all the problems in and of itself, but it does allow the private sector to better serve the families in their practices and it frees up the public sector resources to develop and initiate better outreach and tracking services. Ours is a team effort within the community and many families have already benefited.

There are more positives than negatives attached to this program. Critics should take the time to really look at this complex issue, not pick it apart. It is not a misguided use of public funds, but a sound investment to give every child protection from vaccine-preventable diseases. BRAVO for VFC!

*[Letter for House member
from MI - not used]*

June 13, 1995

TO: Karen Pollitz (SUPERMOM)

FROM: Jackie Noyes

RE: SPEECH MATERIAL FOR VFC

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased that you have called this hearing today to focus on an important, but relatively new program that is so important to so many families. Reason has given way to insanity when members of Congress can't agree to remove all the barriers to immunizations our children now face. I hope that this hearing will serve to clear the air for those doubting Thomases who have questioned the need for this program to continue.

The real issue before us today is one of cost, but not in the usual sense of federal outlays. All children are currently eligible for free vaccines in public clinics paid for by a combination of federal and state dollars. Rather, the cost issue is now focused on who should receive the benefit of receiving immunizations in their medical home and who should not.

Opponents claim that cost isn't an issue and constantly question why taxpayers should subsidize "rich" kids. They have done a formidable job of focusing congressional attention more on keeping out the 3 percent of families that would be considered "rich," as opposed to reaching out to the majority of families who stand to benefit.

As my colleagues are aware, there is a significant drop in employer-provided dependent health care. Hence this program has become a lifeline for our working, middle class families. I'm pleased to stand in support of a program that is already benefiting the families in Michigan. Although the program is only 8 months old, we have already noted a significant shift in the number of families that can have their children immunized in their medical home, a shift from 40% to 53%.

This is an important investment of the dollars entrusted to us by the taxpayers and I urge my colleagues to recognize it as such. Listen carefully; much is at stake.

Health Secretary Meets With Makers of Vaccine

By ROBERT PEAR

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 1 — Donna E. Shalala, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, met today with vaccine manufacturers, but she got no commitment to hold down prices as President Clinton has demanded.

The meeting resulted from Mr. Clinton's assault on the prices that drug companies charge and on the profits they earn. In a speech on Feb. 12, he said the companies were pursuing "profits at the expense of our children," and he instructed Dr. Shalala to meet with pharmaceutical executives to discuss the price and distribution of vaccine.

Today, Dr. Shalala and her lawyers met with several industry executives, including Dr. R. Gordon Douglas Jr., president of the vaccine division of Merck & Company; Ronald J. Saldarini, president of Lederle-Praxis Biologics, a division of the American Cyanamid Company, and David J. Williams, president of Connaught Laboratories.

Tenfold Price Increase

The Administration says the cost of a full set of recommended childhood vaccines rose to \$244 in 1992, from \$23 in 1982.

When asked if she accepted Merck's assertion that 85 percent of the price increase had resulted from new Federal excise taxes and from the addition of two new vaccines, Dr. Shalala replied, "No, I don't." Administration officials have not estimated how much of the price increase is attributable to these factors.

Dr. Douglas insisted that his arithmetic was correct. "Facts are facts," he said, adding that the data came from the Government.

The executives also said that Federal antitrust laws prevented them from engaging in detailed discussions of prices among themselves.

Sweeping Changes Threatened

But Dr. Douglas said in an interview that Merck was unlikely to raise prices for its main childhood vaccine, which protects against measles, mumps and rubella, while the company was holding talks with the Government. The Administration and the drug companies will hold more talks in a few weeks.

Administration officials say that if the companies disregard the President's warning and raise prices, Mr. Clinton may propose sweeping changes in the purchase and distribution of vaccines. Under one proposal being seriously considered by the Administration, the Federal Government and the states would buy up all childhood vaccines at a discount, then distribute to clinics and doctors.

The drug companies vehemently op-

posed of recommended shots, but they maintain that a Government purchase program would not solve the problem.

In his speech on Feb. 12, Mr. Clinton called vaccine prices "shocking" and asserted, "The pharmaceutical industry is spending \$1 billion more each year on advertising and lobbying than it does on developing new and better drugs."

Antitrust Problems Loom

Rejecting such criticism, Dr. Douglas said today: "We think our vaccines are reasonably priced. We already give a 50 percent discount to the Federal Government and the states, which account for 55 percent of all sales of our measles, mumps and rubella vaccine. That is enough to cover all poor people in this country with free vaccine purchased by taxpayers."

"When there is so much trouble with the Federal budget deficit, why should

**Under attack,
drug companies
offer no
concessions.**

the Government buy vaccine for the 45 percent of the population who can afford it?"

Prof. Phillip Areeda, an antitrust expert at Harvard Law School, affirmed that there were serious legal risks when drug company executives discussed prices with Government officials, even when the discussions concern a possible limit on prices.

"For them to meet the Secretary and hear her statement of chastisement about drug prices presents no antitrust problems," Mr. Areeda said. "If any one firm says it will re-examine its prices in the light of the Secretary's admonition, that would also be O.K. But if they were to agree among themselves as to the prices they charge, that would be a very serious antitrust problem. And if they said collectively that they would charge only 10 percent above costs, that could be an illegal maximum price-fixing agreement."

SUBJECT

CLINTON FREE VACCINE PROGRAM

BROADCAST EXCERPT

TOM BROKAW (ANCHOR): The Clinton Administration today confirmed it plans to provide free vaccines for every child in America starting in 1995. The cost -- about a billion dollars a year. Currently more than a third of the children under two don't get all the shots they need. However, as NBC's national correspondent Bob Kur tells us now, there is only so much the government can do.

BOB KUR (REPORTER): Brenda Arroyo is 19 and a single mother. Connecticut makes it easy for her to have her son vaccinated. It buys the vaccine, pays any related medical bills, reminds her to show up, and provides free transportation to get her there. Yet for some, that's not enough.

MARCELLA DURSO (RN, YALE NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL): There are many psycho-social issues. They have usually transportation problems. There's usually a crisis going on in their lives daily, more than you and I would even think about or expect. So getting here is a lot more difficult than you would think.

KUR: Measles, polio, tetanus, meningitis, hepatitis -- 15 vaccinations in all. A lot of waiting and inconvenience, but it's those who do not make routine health care a priority who present the biggest challenge.

DR. RICHARD YOUNG (CHIEF OF PEDIATRICS, ST RAPHAEL'S): You need a neighborhood health center or a mobile van or some type of easily accessible health care facility in every single county.

KUR: Health care providers here in New Haven will tell you that free vaccine alone won't solve the problem. Only about half the two-year-olds here are up to date on immunizations, and that's in spite of all this city does to get the job done. In one

The Washington Post

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1993

C. Everett Koop

In the Dark About Shots

We have created a misplaced sense of complacency about children's health.

At long last, an administration is coming to grips with the poor immunization record of our youngest children. However, as *The Post* has noted ("Immunity for Children," editorial, Feb. 4), the cost of vaccines is only the tip of the iceberg.

The Clinton administration's proposal that the federal government purchase vaccines for all children is a little like a doctor treating the symptoms without trying to cure the disease. The patient may feel better, but the problem won't go away. In the case of America's startlingly low immunization rate among children under 3 years of age, the real problem is inadequate public education and access to, not availability of, vaccines.

The generation now having children has little memory of the fear of polio epidemics, nor of the crippling effects of polio on those children who did not die. Nor do they remember the deaths that followed measles and diphtheria. Indeed, many of today's young parents never had these childhood diseases themselves.

Ironically, in conquering these and other potentially deadly diseases of childhood, we have inadvertently created a misplaced sense of complacency about children's health. The fact that as many as half of American children under the age of 2 aren't receiving the necessary vaccinations stems in large part from the ignorance of otherwise conscientious, caring and intelligent mothers and fathers. Many parents of preschoolers mistakenly believe that such diseases were eradicated completely a generation ago. The measles epidemic that swept this country between 1988 and 1991 proves just how wrong even people with the best intentions can be.

In advancing a national vaccine purchase plan, the Clinton administration assumes—erroneously—that the problem is solely economic. True, vaccine prices did rise in the 1980s and '90s, when the cost of preventive vaccines doubled as a result of new immunization schedules. In addition, large-



bility insurance for vaccine manufacturers. However, the experience of 11 states that already have vaccine purchase plans should be testament enough that universal availability of free vaccines does not guarantee high immunization rates. At an average of only 63 percent, their immunization rates are little better than the national average of 58 percent. In other states, thanks to a successful private-public partnership, any person—regardless of income level—can have his or her child vaccinated free of charge or on an able-to-pay basis at public health clinics. Quite often private practice physicians refer their patients whose health insurance (disgracefully) does not cover routine childhood immunizations to public

To say that the problem isn't entirely economic doesn't mean that spending more money won't help solve it. However, rather than spending the estimated \$300 million to \$500 million it would take to buy up the nation's vaccine supply, our resources would be better channelled into a carefully orchestrated effort involving industry and government at the state, local and federal levels.

First, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention should increase the number, staff and type of facilities through which government-supplied vaccines are made available. Oncoptions would be to open additional public health centers in underserved urban and to explore alternative means of

operation to include nights and weekends, when working parents are more likely to be able to take their children for care.

Second, the government should initiate a broad public awareness campaign using print and broadcast media regarding the need to vaccinate children on schedule, emphasizing the benefits and cost-effectiveness—in terms of disease prevention—of immunization. Expectant parents and parents of toddlers are logical targets for such a campaign.

Third, the Health and Human Services Department needs to develop questions about a child's immunization history and compile information about vaccines and locations of immunization sites, which states could use when enrolling and re-enrolling individuals in federally subsidized medical programs in order to keep better of vaccinations. HHS also should require states to develop hospital birth registries, computerized immunization tracking systems and referral procedures for state-administered programs, as well as a plan for transportation assistance to Medicaid-eligible children.

Fourth, private insurance coverage of immunization services must be expanded to make employee health insurance plans covering well-baby and well-child care able to the self-employed and to small businesses at group discount rates. Immunization coverage should be available without patient co-payment, co-insurance or any annual deductible requirements. To offset the additional expense to insurance carriers, the government should allow a special 40 percent tax credit, with the balance of the extra cost deductible at 100 percent for all employees.

The good intentions that pave the road to children's health must be tempered with a shot of reality. To buy vaccines without ensuring the public knows how important they are and where, how and when to get them for their children is tantamount to answering a by saying, "Call me in the morning."

**ELEMENTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S
CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATION INITIATIVE**

I. Immediate infusion of funds into the non-profit and public delivery systems for vaccines.

For the remainder of Fiscal Year 1993, the President will seek an additional \$300 million to strengthen the public service delivery infrastructure. Future legislation will include funding for FY 1994 and beyond.

supplement

The Office of Management and Budget estimates that the additional FY 1993 funding will lead to the immunization of one million more infants and children, starting this summer. The funds will be directed to non-profit and public clinics in underserved rural and urban communities. The clinics will be able to use the funds to hire additional nurses and outreach staff, keep facilities open longer, establish new service locations, expand informational and educational programs, improve vaccine safety and research, increase ties to family-based community organizations, and help establish a national tracking system.

II. Aggressive efforts by the Department of Health and Human Services to help assure adequate supply of vaccines at reasonable prices.

The President has directed the Secretary of HHS to enter into negotiations with the nation's vaccine manufacturers to develop agreements that will:

(1) Assure that any state can purchase any necessary or additional vaccines at reasonable prices.

(2) Assure an adequate supply of all necessary vaccines at economical prices for federally assisted programs, including those administered by the Centers for Disease Control, the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Indian Health Service, and the Health Care Financing Administration.

III. An initiative that will guarantee the immunization of every American child.

In cooperation with Congress, the Administration will prepare an initiative that aims to:

(1) Guarantee vaccination coverage for all children, regardless of whether they use public, non-profit or private health providers.

**Elements of the President's
Childhood Immunisation Initiative
Page Two**

(2) Establish a new information and tracking system to permit public health agencies to follow up children who have not been adequately immunised, to measure the immunisation status of communities, and to monitor for disease outbreaks.

(3) Provide increased long-term funding to rebuild the immunisation infrastructure in the nation's hardest hit inner city and rural areas. The funding could be used to add staff, increase clinic hours, expand service locations and reach out to families.

(4) Support increased efforts to assure the safety of vaccines administered to children, and speed the development of newer and more effective vaccines.

(5) Strengthen the Vaccine Compensation program for children suffering vaccine-related injuries, and simplify information provided to families about vaccine safety and use.

(6) Augment the authority of the Secretary of Health and Human Services to respond to shortages of vaccine supplies in the public and private markets.

(7) Improve Medicaid coverage to make vaccines available at reasonable prices to all state Medicaid programs, and provide recommended coverage for children enrolled in Medicaid.

(8) Increase international cooperative efforts to eliminate preventable childhood diseases.

The Washington Post

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 1993

Health Experts Skeptical About Immunization Plan

By Amy Goldstein and Spencer Rich
Washington Post Staff Writers

Medical experts in the Washington area said yesterday an ambitious new campaign by the Clinton administration to vaccinate all the nation's young children may be largely unable to increase immunization rates in the area, which has performed poorly for years.

Pediatricians and public health officials hailed the comprehensive campaign announced yesterday, which seeks to have the federal government buy all vaccines and distribute them free. The campaign also will try to increase public awareness and the accessibility of immunizations that are a cornerstone of children's health.

But in public clinics and private offices, doctors said their own experience in the met-

ropolitan area has proved how difficult it can be to ensure that children aged 2 and younger get the medicine they need to avoid measles, mumps, whooping cough and other dangerous illnesses.

"Vaccines are available. The problem is, the kids are not available," said Francis Palumbo, a pediatrician who works in a large Northwest Washington practice where most of the patients have health insurance and well educated parents.

The District has one of the nation's worst immunization rates, with only 39 percent of the children properly vaccinated by age 2, according to a recent survey by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In Maryland and Virginia, as in many other states, slightly more than half the tod-

dlers had been immunized, according to the CDC survey.

The millions of unimmunized U.S. children are the focus of the campaign announced yesterday by Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, which will cost about \$1.5 billion in 1995 when it takes effect fully. Shalala said financing of the government purchase of vaccines will be included as part of the overall health reform package to be sent to Congress.

The most far-reaching feature is a plan in which the federal government would, starting in 1995, buy all the vaccine necessary to inoculate babies and toddlers against nine childhood diseases. The vaccine would be distributed free to public health clinics and

Re: IMMUNIZATION, DC, Cat. 1

Health Workers Cite Need to Educate Parents on Immunization

IMMUNIZATION, From B3

physicians, including private doctors whose patients now pay for such shots.

The federal government would be authorized to spend up to \$1.1 billion for the vaccine, but would negotiate the actual price with the drug industry, which strongly dislikes the plan.

Full sets of vaccines cost about \$244 a child if bought privately, but the government buys them for half that amount when purchasing for public distribution.

The program also calls for \$300 million to be used to hire employees and extend hours at public clinics and to send workers into neighborhoods to find unimmunized children. In addition, the program includes \$152 million to start a national, computerized system that would keep track of which children have received shots and be used to help notify families in which children fall behind on their medicine.

"Proper immunization is the right thing to do and the smart thing to do," Shalala said, noting that fewer than two-thirds of U.S. children have been immunized fully by age 2.

Sen. Nancy Landon Kassebaum (R-Kan.), the senior Republican on the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, said the administration's vaccine plan "misdiagnosed the problem. . . . The real problem is that too many parents do not know the value of immunizations" or do not know where their children can get them easily, she said.

Largely, several health officials said that they

already received free vaccines through state agreements with the CDC and that supplies have been adequate.

"The immunization problem in this country is not the availability of the biological materials, it is bridging the gap between where the children are and where the shots are," said Joshua Lipsman, the health department director in Arlington, where an estimated 45 percent of the babies and toddlers are immunized fully.

Richard Levinson, chief of preventive health services for the D.C. Commission on Public

"The problem is, we could not motivate people to come up."

— Richard Levinson

Health, said the District's outreach efforts have intensified, with only limited results.

In a special campaign by the commission last year, city workers and volunteers traveled to all eight wards on Saturdays, knocking on parents' doors and offering free immunizations at schools and other neighborhood centers. The campaign reached 1,200 children, a fraction of the expected number.

"We knew where they were, we knew what was needed," Levinson said. "The problem is, we could not motivate people to come up."

Levinson praised Clinton's plan for a tracking

system, predicting that it would help his office find individuals who need shots.

Diane Dwyer, who supervises the immunization program for the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, said tracking systems raise questions of confidentiality and pose logistical problems. She noted that 75,000 children are born in Maryland each year, and that 90 percent of the state's children who are immunized get their shots in private doctors' offices, many of which do not have computerized records.

Dorothy Anne Richmond, a pediatrician at a children's clinic at Georgetown University Medical Center, said that even if tracking identifies unimmunized children, "How do you get them to come to a clinic or a [mobile immunization] van?"

Georgetown has circulated such a van since last fall in poor neighborhoods of Southeast Washington, but Richmond said she was not sure it has made a dent in the immunization rate there.

Shalala did not say yesterday how the \$1.1 billion for vaccine purchases would be funded. The details will be included in President Clinton's national health plan, which officials said yesterday may be postponed two weeks until mid-May because of the illness of Hillary Rodham Clinton's father.

Officials said federal government would phase out the purchase of all vaccine once every child is covered by health insurance. Shalala also said the administration will seek to extend permanently the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Act, funded by an excise tax on vaccine, which provides compensation for rare instances in which children are injured by the vaccines.

Clinton's Free-Vaccine Plan Raises Skepticism

Continued From Page A1

have lawmakers today, Dennis E. Bish, the secretary of health and the state health department, said that the Clinton plan, which would give free vaccines to all children under 18, is a "good idea" but that it is not a "silver bullet" to solve the problem of immunization. Bish said that the Clinton plan is a "good idea" but that it is not a "silver bullet" to solve the problem of immunization. Bish said that the Clinton plan is a "good idea" but that it is not a "silver bullet" to solve the problem of immunization.

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Free-Vaccine Plan Creates Unusual Array of Skeptics

By JASON DEPARLE
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 21 — As President Clinton proposes to \$1.1 billion a year buying vaccines for all American children, he faces an unusual combination of skeptics: not just Congressional conservatives but also of the usually conservative sectors who work the neighborhoods. Immunization rates are

Nothing like a political alliance is born among such odd creatures. But the complaints that Republicans hurled today at a Capitol Hill hearing room find an odd echo across the Anacostia River, inside a medical van that works the city's poorest wards.

In both places, critics argue that the Clinton plan, in addressing the sharp rise in vaccine costs, gives short shrift to what they call the real cause of the immunization problem: disorganized, or even neglectful, parents.

Rights and Responsibilities

The arguments involved do more than illuminate the program Mr. Clinton has chosen as his first major domestic initiative. They also shed light on what he may have meant when he called himself a new Democrat, one who would shift from the old talk of rights toward a new focus on responsibilities.

Mr. Clinton's critics argue that the immunization plan under that assertion by creating a new entitlement program for the

middle class, giving free vaccines to people who can already afford them while demanding nothing from anyone in return.

In an unusual joint Congressional hearing today, legislators from both parties called it a matter of national shame that the United States' immunization rates inspire comparisons with those of Albania and Haiti. As many as 40 percent of American children reach the age of 3 without being fully immunized.

Causes of Problem

Most officials agree that the problem has multiple causes: vaccine costs have skyrocketed, the number of families without health insurance is growing, public clinics are overcrowded and some young families, increasingly headed by single parents, simply do not seek services.

The disagreements come over emphasis. The Administration focuses on working families who seek but cannot afford vaccines, while its critics call attention to the many people who can already receive free shots through Medicaid or public clinics but do not seek them.

Although the immunization problem clearly straddles into the middle class, the rates in distressed urban neighborhoods are especially low.

Each side argues from a favorite statistic.

Defending the Clinton plan by

Continued on Page A16, Column 1

THE NEW YORK TIMES NATIONAL THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 1993

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