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Radio Address to the Nation on the Administration's Domestic Agenda

June 22, 1991

I'd like to talk with you about some things that are very important to me: families and homes, futures and hopes—the ways in which we Americans can tackle the domestic problems that confront us.

In recent months, we've all felt a bracing surge of American optimism and determination. We look at our schools and say: Let's make them better. We look at our neighborhoods and say: Let's make them even safer. We see opportunities around us and say: Let's go for it.

In many ways, we've regained a sense of ourselves and our values. For the past quarter-century, politicians in Washington have acted as if the Federal Government could solve every problem from chigger bites to earthquakes. No more. We all realize that government has real limits. You can't replace values with regulations. You can't replace parents with caseworkers. And you can't replace the dedication to service with mandates.

Over the years, a number of well-meaning laws have thrown up barriers to individual action. Gradually, they have begun to transform government from the guardian of individual liberty into a weed that chokes off freedom and strangles initiative.

I'd like to ask your help in pruning this creeping weed so that we can take on problems that concern us all. Our administration's domestic agenda strives to build a more effective, compassionate government, to encourage service to others, and to give Americans the elbowroom that they need to do great deeds.

Several months ago, I challenged the Congress to pass two bills in 100 days. One was a comprehensive crime package. It includes measures to help law enforcement officials defend the peace, to let citizens live without fear of neighborhood terror, to compensate victims, and to punish vic-

timizers swiftly and firmly.

The American people are tired of watching hoodlums walk, of seeing criminals mock our justice system with endless technicalities. They want to bring order to streets shaken by chaos and crime. Yet, for more than 2 years, Congress has failed to act on my proposals to fight crime and strengthen the rule of law.

The second 100-days bill is a transportation package that would give States the freedom to build the highways and transit systems they want and not just those Washington dictates. It encourages innovation, such as private efforts, to improve our transportation system. It tries to put Federal dollars where they belong—on national needs, not pork-barrel projects. Some in Congress want to weaken the bill's focus, pretend that our transportation needs and challenges haven't changed. As a result, no bill has yet reached my desk.

I chose the crime and transportation bills because of their obvious importance to the American public. But our administration's agenda includes much more. We have submitted a civil rights package aimed at attacking discrimination and building a new atmosphere of brotherhood and trust. We've proposed a revolution in education, a dramatic reform of public housing, and a banking package that would restore the health of our financial system. While there's been some movement, Congress still has not passed any of these bills.

We have made progress, however. Our education strategy has caught fire in communities from coast to coast. And to help our families, we've just completed a major reorganization of the Department of Health and Human Services, giving unprecedented attention to children's needs.

Think of this when someone claims that we don't spend enough money to have a

vision. Dollars don't make visions; deeds do. When government spends your money, it shouldn't do so for appearances. It should spend your money on programs that work. This philosophy lies at the heart of our domestic agenda. We want to restore proportion to government by letting government do what it does best and freeing you to do what you do best. We want to restore faith in government by making real commitments, not impossible promises.

But while we Americans demand more effective government, we also must demand more of ourselves. Entrepreneurs should be free to pursue their visions boldly, knowing that our future depends upon their success. Neighbors should seize the chance to help one another, to settle disputes over a cup of coffee rather than in a courtroom, to commit the little acts of kindness that turn rows of houses into neighborhoods. Let's stop seeking excuses and find opportunities to serve, to help one another, to become

sources of wealth and Points of Light.

John Kennedy was right when he said: "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

While government can't do everything, it ought to do its job. So today, I urge Congress to join us in doing the Nation's business. Unshackle our initiatives on crime, transportation, banking, economic growth, education, energy, housing, and civil rights. There is no shame in acting, and there's plenty of time between now and Congress' August recess to get the job done.

We know we can do great things. Together, let's do them.

Thank you, and may God bless you and our great nation.

Note: The address was recorded at 12:03 p.m. on June 21 in the Cabinet Room at the White House. It was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 22.

Remarks at the Dedication Ceremony for the Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher House in Bethesda, Maryland

June 24, 1991

Thank you, Secretary. What a beautiful day out here at Bethesda. Please be seated and thank you. Thank you, Secretary Garrett. And good morning, Admiral Lichtman. Thank you and all your associates for this warm welcome. I want to, of course, single out Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher for their generosity, not just for this but for others to follow.

I want to, with the risk of embarrassment, say that coming in I congratulated Admiral Trost, our former CNO, for his vision in getting this program underway. And everybody jumped all over me and said, it's not Carl, it's Pauline. So, we salute her as well, and both of them for their vision.

It's a special day for Barbara and me, coming back here to Bethesda to see an exceptional group of people. Glad we don't have to stay this time. *[Laughter]* But it does give me an opportunity, seeing so many familiar faces—with my tiny, minor

problem in mind—to just say thank you. For those who have not been inside this place as a patient, the care and the concern for everybody—all the patients that I visited with telling me this—is just unbelievable. And it's typical of hospitals, of course, all across this country, but we saw it firsthand. And I extend you all my heartfelt thanks. No fibrillation, just bringing it on out—*[laughter]*—and would give you this report. Over the weekend, I played three hard sets of tennis, ran 2 miles, hit some golf balls. So, lest there be any doubts about the efficiency of Navy medicine, why, Admiral, I'm back 100 percent.

And true story and perhaps of not much interest, but I got this letter from a farmers' group during my recovery: "This wouldn't have happened if you'd eaten your broccoli." *[Laughter]* I would rather risk refibrillation, but that's my position. *[Laughter]* But there's a lot goes on at this medical center