

of the huge dilemmas we face—and that can't be resolved today in this speech, but I just want to lay it out there—is one that all of you know. And that is we are spending 14 percent of our income on health care. No other country except Canada spends more than 9, and they're just a little above 9.

And every day we read in the paper another expert, just like there's one today, saying, well, you certainly can't save any money on health care costs in this country. God forbid that you should put any of that in there; you can't do that. If we can't do that, we can't fix the deficit; we can't fix the economy; we can't turn America around. And if we could lower the rate of health care spending increase, we would save more than twice as much money in the private sector and in the public sector, unleashing more money for investment than anything we can do in terms of tax cuts, spending increases, or anything else to turn this economy around. So there's plenty for us to do.

What I want you to know is that I do not believe our problems are insoluble. And one of my major goals is to leave the next President with a new set of things to worry about. [Laughter] I'm getting bored reading the same problems in the paper, decade after decade. I want people to have to deal with new problems.

I am asking you today to do two things: First of all, to personally invest yourself in this great mission. It is our job in this generation to deal with these problems so that the American dream

can endure. Ultimately, that is why everybody should come to work for the Federal Government and why everyone's job counts. And I am asking you to remember how terribly difficult life is for many people who pay our bills and pay your salary and mine.

I got an incredibly moving call the other day from a friend of mine, shortly before I took office, in which he said he had just talked to a person who worked in his office who said that—in bad grammar but compelling truth—he said, “This woman came up to me and said, ‘You know, it's scary to be a little people.’ ” And it really is.

I want to send a signal to this country that I may not do everything right, and I can't do everything that's just popular in the short run, but every day in every way we're trying to set an example for the people that sent us here. We don't want the people to sacrifice their income before the Government sacrifices everything it can. We don't want the people who bore the burden in the eighties to make any contributions before people who reaped the benefits of the eighties do their fair share, and that together we really believe we can make a difference. If you help me and we work together, I'm confident that we can.

Thank you, and bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:02 a.m. in the New Executive Office Building.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Economic Advisers February 3, 1993

Q. Mr. President, while we have you, why do Social Security recipients in the middle class appear to be getting a little bit more nervous as your economic plan unfolds? Should they be?

The President. Well, the way you folks were leaking the story today—[laughter].

The people of this country ought to know that I'm going to do my best to be fair to the people that I ran to represent and to get the job machine of this country moving again and bring the deficit down. And I think the people will believe that I've been fair and comprehensive when the plan comes out. But you

know, it's very difficult for us to make decisions in an environment where we have no control over who says what, about what really comes out, and half the stuff that comes out is not even accurate. So all I can tell you is I'm not going to comment on the specifics until I settle on the plan, and then I'll come forward with it. But it will be consistent with what I said today to the employees over at the OMB.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.