

May 6 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1993

Office at the White House, at a meeting with former baseball player Stan Musial. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters on Health Care Reform

May 6, 1993

Q. Mr. Clinton, has your health care program slipped into June?

The President. No. What do you mean “slipped into June”?

Q. The announcement of it.

The President. I don’t know when we’re going to announce it. We haven’t decided exactly. But we’re working on it. The most important thing is we’re going to finish, outline the details on time. Then we’re going to—and one more round of extensive consultations. When we come forward with it depends in part on how we’re doing with the consultations. You know, I had lunch today with leading Republican Senators and Members of Congress. We’ll just see what happens.

But the critical thing is, we want to introduce it and reveal it in time to make sure it is considered this year. The American people need health security. We need to control the cost of the health care system. We need to be able to guarantee that the American people are not going to lose their health coverage if some misfortune befalls them. And we’re going to give the American people that kind of plan. It will be exciting, and it will be dealt with this year.

Q. Do you want to make sure it doesn’t get caught up in reconciliation?

The President. Well, I think it’s going to be caught up to some extent in it regardless. But I think there is a limit to—I don’t think Congress can consider it until they consider the reconciliation. The real issue—it’s really almost a technical one—it is at what point in the calendar must a bill be introduced in order to go through all the processes to be considered and voted on by the end of the year. No one thinks it will be considered at the time reconciliation is. The only question is, how quickly do we have to get it in so that it could actually be voted on if we can persuade the Congress to vote on it in this calendar year. That’s the issue. And it’s almost a mechanical question as much as anything else. But we’re going to have a good program. I’m encouraged.

NOTE: The exchange began at 4:25 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House, at a meeting with the Goodwill Industries National Graduate of the Year. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on Presenting the Commander in Chief Trophy to the U.S. Air Force Academy Football Team

May 6, 1993

Thank you very much. Please be seated. I want to say what a great pleasure it is for me to welcome the seniors from the United States Air Force Academy football team to the White House to receive the 1992 Commander in Chief’s Trophy. With me to honor the Falcons are the Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, the acting Secretary of the Air Force, Michael Donnelly, General McPeak, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and Congresswoman Pat Schroeder,

Congressman Martin Lancaster, and of course, the Commander of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell—Chairman—I said the wrong word, didn’t I? It’s been a long day, folks. We were inside looking at cartoons making fun of the President. That’s what General Powell and Secretary Aspin and I were doing. [Laughter] It’s all I can do to regain my composure here. I also want to welcome the Air Force Academy Superintendent, Lt. General Bradley

Hosmer, and the Academy athletic director, Colonel Ken Schweitzer.

This is my first chance to present the Commander in Chief's Trophy, but I know it's the Air Force's eighth trip to claim it—and the fourth year in a row, something no other team has done. Now, I know the Falcons are smart football players, the epitome of student athletes. But they don't seem to understand the concept of a traveling trophy. I mean the idea is the trophy should travel among the service academies, not for the Air Force to travel with it between Colorado and Washington every year. [Laughter]

Of course, the Army and the Navy made it tough this year: both games were hard-fought to the final gun. But the spirit and determination of this team carried the day. Now the class of 1993 has the distinction of being the first service academy class to go undefeated against the other academies. And who would have thought that the Air Force would have accomplished all this with a relentless ground attack?

In the early eighties Air Force's head coach was Ken Hatfield, a native of my State and later the head coach of the University of Arkansas. His offensive coordinator was Fischer DeBerry. When they installed the wishbone offense, they found a winning combination. Since Coach DeBerry took over as head coach in 1984, his teams have won the Commander in Chief's Trophy six times and have earned their way to seven post-season bowl games.

But more importantly than the victories or the trophy are the life lessons Coach DeBerry has taught in word and in deed. In his own inimitable mile-a-minute style, the coach instills the values of discipline, teamwork, and faith that produce success on the gridiron and in life. His guidance and the leadership of the team seniors sustained the Falcons through the challenges and triumphs of a 7–5 season that closed with a heartbreaking loss to the University of Mississippi in the Liberty Bowl.

The University of Arkansas has lost some Liberty Bowl games, too; I know about that. Through it all the 1992 Falcons lived up to their credo: Together, one at a time. Sticking together, believing in each other, taking one game at a time brought them here today. I might add, it will take us as Americans a long way if we can follow those rules.

In honoring the team spirit of the Falcons today I can't overlook one special player, Cadet

First Class Carlton McDonald, whose efforts set a standard of All-American excellence at corner back. If you don't believe me, just ask the quarterbacks and the kickers who were terrorized. Whether intercepting passes or blocking kicks, he wreaked havoc on opposing offenses. I'm glad that he will be on our side as an Air Force officer.

In fact, I am proud that in 20 days—26 days and a wake-up—all of you will be commissioned as second lieutenants in the United States Air Force. I encourage you there to carry on your spirit of dedication and selflessness as you become leaders for our Nation.

So now it is with great pride that I present this 1992 Commander in Chief's Trophy to the team captains of the Air Force Academy Falcons, Jarvis Baker, Chris Baker, and Carlton McDonald. Will they please come up, along with the coach?

Let's give them a hand.

[At this point, the President presented the trophy, and the team then presented gifts to the President.]

I want you to know that a couple of years ago my wife and daughter went to visit the Air Force Academy, and I think it was one of the most important events of her childhood. She came back with brochures and pictures, and we talk about it all the time. Just last week we had another conversation about it, and she asked me if her eyes were too bad to fly. [Laughter] She really loves the Air Force Academy.

I also want to say something to you, coach. I'm glad the Air Force Academy has a coach who doesn't speak with an accent. [Laughter]

And I can't close, General McPeak, without a little word of personal pride here. The President's military aide from the Air Force, Major Johnson, over here, was herself a distinguished athlete at the Air Force Academy in basketball. She can still run the President into the dirt on any given morning. [Laughter] I thank the Air Force Academy for her, and I thank all of you for being here today. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:44 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.