

The President's Radio Address

January 1, 1994

Good morning, and happy New Year. I hope you're enjoying this day with your family and your friends. I hope you feel that you have a lot to be thankful for on New Year's Day. I know that I certainly do.

I am grateful that our economy is coming back to life, that optimism and direction are back. The deficit is down. Interest rates and inflation are down. Investments and consumer confidence are up. We have more trade opportunities with NAFTA and with the GATT world trade agreement. Millions of you have refinanced your homes and businesses. The private sector has created about a million and a half new jobs in just 10 months, more than were created in the previous 4 years.

But our Nation is about more than economics. It's also about our sense of community, the obligations we have to each other. For too long we've been coming apart instead of coming together. In 1993, we began to reverse that, and I'm grateful.

We established the national service program to allow our young people to serve their communities and earn money for their college educations. We reorganized the student loan program so that all students can now afford to borrow money from this program because they can repay on lower interest rates and based on the incomes they earn, not just the money they borrow. We made democracy more of a reality for millions of people with the motor voter bill, which makes it easier to register to vote. We wrote our best family values into law with the family leave law, which says to parents, if you have a newborn child or an ill parent, you can be with them, you can take a little time off from work without losing your jobs. We also strengthened our families when we gave tax relief to 15 million working families on modest wages with children so that they can stay off welfare, stay at work, and still succeed as parents. And after 7 years of gridlock, Washington finally woke to the growing fear of violence on

our streets when Congress passed and I signed the Brady bill.

All over America, beyond Washington, people are beginning to take more responsibility for themselves, for their children, for their communities, working to save jobs, improve schools, and make our streets safer. In 1994, we must resolve to do even more, to help the middle class with more jobs and with income growth, to help the poor who are trapped in whole neighborhoods where there's no work, few stable families, and where violence is the norm. There is still a great deal to do.

So in 1994, let us resolve to improve the health security, the personal security, and the job security of the American people who work hard and play by the rules. With all the changes sweeping our Nation and the world, let us resolve to make these changes our friends and not our enemies.

In 1994, we must work to keep the economic recovery going. We must pass comprehensive health care reform that provides benefits that can never be taken away. We must put more police on the street and take more assault weapons off the street. We must adopt world-class standards for our schools and provide lifetime training for our workers.

Millions of Americans, even those with good health insurance, must live in fear of losing their health coverage. Another 2 million Americans lost their insurance in 1993. Our health care reform plan is a guaranteed system of private insurance that will cover every American. We'll maintain the health care system in private hands, improve the quality of health care, increase the choices you have as a consumer, and protect the doctor-patient relationship. And all the while, if we do it in the way we've recommended, we will reduce mountains of paperwork and billions of dollars of unnecessary costs in the present system. Health reform is a good deal for our families and our future, and it should pass in 1994.

I also want Congress to pass the crime bill without delay. Our proposal will put 100,000 more police officers on the street, expand boot camps for young offenders, get handguns out of the hands of minors, ban assault weapons, and have stiffer sentences for violent repeat offenders.

This year, I'm also determined to start creating a world-class system of lifetime education and training, especially for those who lose their jobs. This means setting high standards first for our public schools and challenging every State to meet them—world-class standards. It means new investments, from Head Start for preschoolers to job training for young people to retraining for experienced workers. Better schools and better skills are the best way to promote competitiveness for our economy and equal opportunity for every American.

And we must continue to work to make welfare a second chance, not a way of life. Our welfare reform proposal will embrace two simple values: work and responsibility. Those who can work should do so. And both parents must take responsibility for their children, because governments don't raise children, parents do.

In 1993, I met a lot of Americans who made a vivid impression on me and whose impression caused me to redouble my determination to face the problems which our country has too long ignored. I met a young man in California who changed schools to go to a safer school but whose brother was shot standing in front of him in the safer school as they tried to register. I met a widow in Detroit who supports herself and her children, enrolled in a training program to become a machinist, to prove again that most Americans want to work and don't want to be on welfare. I met a businessman in Florida who poured his heart into his small furniture store, only to be told by his insurance company that he had to drop coverage of his own parents

whose age made them a high risk. All these folks strengthened my commitment to work for better education and better job training, universal health coverage that can never be taken away, safer streets, and a stronger America.

The stories of real people inspire the struggles and the efforts that drive my administration. We've got to keep working to rebuild the American economy, to revive middle class life and middle class values in America, and to restore our sense of community. We have to recognize that all these problems are interrelated. You can't just solve one without the other. We have to remember that these problems developed over a long period of time; they can't be solved overnight. We have to remember that Government can't do everything alone, everyone must play his or her part. But we must remember, too, that we can make a difference and we can do better.

In that spirit, let us all make New Year's resolutions today. Let's resolve among other things that in 1994 every American will have health care that's always there and can never be taken away, that in 1994 we will take back our streets and make them safer for our children, that in 1994 we will improve our schools and hold ourselves to world-class standards of excellence and that we will give our workers throughout their lifetimes the skills they need to compete and win in a tough global economy, that in 1994 we will continue to work to favor work over welfare, and that we will continue to rebuild our economy and, with it, the American dream.

If we'll stay together and work together, we can do these things. Have a happy and healthy New Year's. And thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:15 p.m. on December 31, 1993, in Hilton Head, SC, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 1, 1994.

Remarks on Health Care Reform and an Exchange With Reporters *January 3, 1994*

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this first meeting of 1994 for our administration, a meeting devoted to charting our course this year on health care. We all look

back now in American history at—remember 1935 is the year that the American people adopted Social Security; 1965 is the year the American people adopted Medicare. I believe