

May 30 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1994

one helped to build a nation we love. Let us remember them. Let us pray for their souls and those of their families and resolve to carry on the never-finished work of freedom.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to World War II veteran Elizabeth P. McIntosh and master of ceremonies Katy Daley.

Remarks at the Swearing-In Ceremony for Members of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

May 31, 1994

Thank you very much, Secretary Shalala and Mr. Vice President, Florence Griffith Joyner and Tom McMillen. Glad to see others here in the audience, our Surgeon General, Dr. Elders; Assistant Secretary of HHS Phil Lee; and so many others who are here.

Let me say that I was once asked if I wanted Al Gore to be Vice President because he could run faster than me, and then I would get my times down. [*Laughter*] That was not the primary reason that I asked him to join the ticket in 1992, but I did think it was important, and I do believe it is important that all of us exemplify by what we do a commitment to the work we are about to celebrate when we swear in the President's Council today.

Let me explain why I think this is important. This morning before I came out here, I had about 10 minutes, and I sat down and I made these little notes here, to try to see if I could get across to you and, perhaps through you, to the American people why this day is really a big deal to me.

Before I ran for President, I devoted a lot of time, very private time, to reflecting on the nature of public service, the nature of government, what the role of government in our life is, and what things government cannot do. And I thought a lot about what the American people have to do for themselves in order for this country to work right.

So consider the following: Our Government and our administration has worked hard here at home to get the economy up and going and the deficit down, to pass the most sweeping education and training legislation for workers and young people trying to compete in a global economy in 30 years, to expand trade more in 15 months than in the previous generation. Abroad, in the last couple of days, we have

celebrated something that's good for our health: for the first time since the dawn of the atomic age, the United States and Russia no longer have nuclear missiles pointed at each other.

An enormous amount of what we do involves the health of our people. In the area of the environment, we're working hard on a new clean air act and a safe drinking water act. In the area of crime, we passed an assault weapons ban and the Brady bill and more police officers and more prevention, more opportunities for our young people to stay out of trouble, in the area of strengthening the family, something that directly relates to the health of American families, the Family and Medical Leave Act, which permits families to take time off when their children or their parents are ill. Our FDA is taking on a pretty tough fight with the tobacco industry and now looking into the whole issue of the narcotic or addictive effects and whether they can be varied based on certain production techniques. In the area of health care, the First Lady and the Department of Health and Human Services and others have worked on immunization, on more primary and preventive care in our health care proposal, on trying to provide prescription medicines to elderly people.

Now, in the course of doing this, we've made quite a few enemies. We've made the NRA mad, the cigarette industry mad, certain business interests that don't agree with either the economic program or the environmental initiatives or other things, many of but not all of the health insurance companies, and some particularly extremist groups who disapprove even of what we've done to expand the frontiers of medical research. It has all been worth it. It is part of what we are supposed to do.

Now, having said all that, when I picked up the briefing for this event and I realized that

43 percent of the adults in this country don't exercise, that 5 years ago the Council sponsored a poll that said 42 percent of the American people who were adults were actively interested in pursuing a healthier lifestyle which would mean more exercise and a better diet and it's dropped now to 30 percent; when I see the number of children who live in our cities and are vulnerable to gangs and violence and drugs, and I realize that there are no public swimming pools in many of our cities available to them, that the basketball courts don't work anymore, that there are no longer baseball leagues for kids to play in in the summertime; when I look at large employers who spend fabulous amounts of money on health care but very little on the wellness of their employees, I say to myself, I like fighting these fights. I don't mind making these enemies. But unless the American people do something to seize control of their own personal health care destiny and that of their families and that of their friends and neighbors and the kids who live in their cities and communities, we are not going to become what we ought to become. That is why this day is important to me and to the American people.

So I say to the members of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, thank you. We will support you in every way we can. We hope your message will be heard loud and clear.

I say to my fellow Americans, ask yourselves what you can do to improve your own health, the health of your communities, and the availability of sporting and teamwork activities to kids. When you play sports, you don't have time to do other things. When you're involved in teamwork, you learn how to deal with the disappointment of defeat and frustration. You even learn how to manage unfairness. These are important things, lessons in life that have to be learned. A Government program cannot provide them.

So we'll keep doing our job. Let's help them do their job.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:21 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Florence Griffith Joyner and Tom McMillen, Cochairs of the Council.

Statement on Representative Dan Rostenkowski

May 31, 1994

Like all Americans, Chairman Rostenkowski has the right to contest the charges made against him and to have his day in court. Chairman

Rostenkowski and others have helped create real momentum for health care reform, and I am confident that legislation will pass this year.

Statement on the Death of Ezra Taft Benson

May 31, 1994

It was with sadness that I learned today of the passing of Ezra Taft Benson, who served our country and his church with ceaseless dedication over a long life productively lived.

It is no accident that one of Mr. Benson's most famous books emphasized in its words and thoughts the three values his life best represented—church, God, and country. He was a leader of his church for five decades, he preached with passion for unity, solidarity, and

responsibility within the family, and he served ably in the Eisenhower administration as Agriculture Secretary.

As we celebrate D-Day and the liberation of Europe, it is important to remember that Mr. Benson was the first representative of his church to reenter post-war Europe, where he distributed aid and lifted the spirits of thousands of survivors.