

part of this is obviously the mandate, which is why we tried to work out a discount. The main thing I want you to know is I have no interest in the Government running the health care system of the country. I am trying to use the power of the Government to organize the market so that small business people and self-employed people can get access to good benefits and so that these kinds of discriminatory practices that insurance companies follow today will not have to be followed in order for people to make money in insurance.

And I believe you have to require everyone to be covered in order to stop the boat from leaking because there's always going to be people who will be dropping their folks even if others pick them up if we adopt these new changes. So it seems to me that that is something we just have to work through. That is the whole concept that has led some of the small business groups to oppose what we're doing. But I think it's also important that you understand that I will not sign a bill that does not have discounts for very small businesses with low payrolls and low profit margins. I won't do that.

I want a bill that preserves the private delivery system we have and that makes the competition that is working very well now for Federal employees and for large businesses available for

people in the small business sector. But I think that none of it will get done unless we can provide the security that every American will know there will always be some health care coverage there. That will also stop a lot of the unfair cost-shifting and permit people to compete on a more even basis. So that is what we are trying to achieve.

I hope that you will be supportive of all the Members of your congressional delegation without regard to party in trying to work through this with less rhetoric and more reality.

You know, I've tried to just get around here and listen to people's real life stories and try to work through the real life stories in a way that solves the problem and permits America to take advantage of what we have, which is the best medical delivery system in the country, and fix what we have, which is the worst financing system in the world. We've got the best medical care in the world, the worst financing system; we ought to be able to figure out how to do that. I think we can. And we have to do it in a way that permits small business to flourish because small business is the main generator of new jobs for the American economy.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:03 p.m. at the Topeka Foundry and Ironworks Co.

## Remarks on Arrival in Kansas City, Missouri

*April 7, 1994*

Thank you very much, Governor Carnahan, Mayor and Mrs. Cleaver, Mr. Holden, Speaker Griffin, and all of you. Thank you for coming out today. I didn't know there would be such a good crowd here. I'd like to stay with you longer, but I'm afraid I'll be late to the meeting if I stay too long.

I do want to say a word or two if I might. First of all, I thank you for your sentiments, and I thank the Mayor and the Governor for what they said. I've had the opportunity to come to Missouri quite a lot since I've been President, mostly because of the terrible ravages of the floods that gripped your State. I'm proud of the work that we were able to do together and

proud of the response of my administration to the problems of people during that flood.

Frankly, the one thing that bothers me is that we can't have our National Government function all the time the way it did during that flood. Why does there have to be an emergency before people will stop using all the hot air and rhetoric that seems to grip Washington, put aside the special interests, talk to one another, ask what the problem is, and try to get it solved? I ran for President because that's what I wanted to do.

When I was the Governor of your neighboring State to the south, it never occurred to me that I could get by day-in and day-out just on hot air. It never occurred to me that the pur-

pose of politics was to try to take words and push people to the furthest extreme, to the left or the right. And I ran for President because I got tired of all the rhetoric, people saying Government couldn't do anything or Government could do everything, people saying everybody out there is on their own or people saying that people had no responsibility to improve their own lot. And I felt that if we could pull this country together and face our problems, we could go into the next century with the American dream alive and well. That's what we're trying to do, and we've made a good beginning on it.

I just want to point out that in the 15 months that I've been President, since we got our economic plan in place, trying to drive down interest rates and drive up investment, our economy has produced 2.5 million jobs, 90 percent of them in the private sector, more than were produced in the previous 4-year period. After 12 years of talking about the deficit while the national debt tripled, if the Congress adopts the budget I have given them now, we'll eliminate 100 Federal programs, cut over 200 more, have the first decrease in discretionary domestic spending since 1969, and we'll have 3 years of declining Government deficits for the first time since Harry Truman of Independence, Missouri, was President of the United States of America.

One of the things that bothers me is that sometimes I think that out here in the country, folks are worried that nothing's getting done in Washington because of what they read about in the papers. Let me tell you, we are moving more rapidly to do more things than we did even last year. The Congress is moving forward at a record pace on the budget. The Congress will take up a crime bill as soon as it comes back on Monday, which will put 100,000 police officers on the street, take assault weapons off the street; it will stiffen penalties and reduce parole for seriously dangerous repeat violent offenders; and it will give our children the means to have recreational facilities, alternatives to imprisonment for first offenses, and other things that will give them a chance to avoid the trouble that has come to so many people in the high crime areas of our country. We can do better, and we're going to with that crime bill.

We have an education bill that we just passed that, for the first time in the history of the country, provides world class standards for all of our schools and encourages grassroots reforms

to achieve them. Soon after the Congress comes back we're going to pass the school-to-work bill, which says to all the kids that don't go on to 4-year colleges, "We care about you, too; your education, your training, and your future's important. We want you to be able to get at least 2 years of further training after you leave high school."

These are the kinds of things that we're doing up there. And I came here tonight also to talk about this health care issue. Let me remind you, my fellow Americans, that health care in America costs 40 to 50 percent more of our income than it does in any other country, and yet we're the only advanced country that doesn't provide health insurance to all of our people so that all of our working people have health care security.

Let me remind you that people on welfare get health care paid for by the Government. But if someone leaves welfare and takes a minimum wage job without health insurance, then that person puts his or her family at risk. The kids don't have health insurance, and you start paying taxes for somebody who wouldn't go to work to have health care. That is crazy, and we can do better.

Let me remind you that we have 81 million Americans—81 million of us live in families where somebody's been sick, where there's been a child with diabetes, a father with a heart attack, a mother with cancer. And they have what the insurance companies call preexisting conditions, which means that under the present system, you either pay higher insurance rates, you can't get insurance at all, or you can never change your job because if you do you lose your health insurance. No other country tolerates that. We live in a country where the average 18-year-old will change jobs eight times in a lifetime; when people in their fifties and sixties are losing their jobs, having to find new ones, and they can't get health insurance now because they're older and their rates are higher than younger people. That is wrong. We can do better. And we can do better without messing up what's good about America's health care system.

So all of my adversaries on this health care thing, I wish everybody would just tone the rhetoric down and talk about the real existence of real problems and how we can solve them. The truth is I don't want the Government to run the health care system. It's a private system; it ought to stay private. What I want is guaran-

teed private insurance for everybody. I want all of you to be able to choose your doctor or your health care plan, not just once but every year. More and more workers and their families are losing the right to choose their health care plan. I want to guarantee it for all Americans. And I want people to be guaranteed those benefits in the workplace, just like most of us are today. And finally, I want small business people and self-employed people to have access to the same good competitive rates that those of us in Government and big business do today. I think that is fair, reasonable, and just. And if we don't do it, we're going to continue to have serious problems in this country.

I hope you will help us provide health care security for all. We've been fooling with it for 60 years. We haven't done it yet. And what have we got to show for it? Continued problems. We can do better, and this year we're going to, with your help.

Thank you very much, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:35 p.m. at the Kansas City Downtown Municipal Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mel Carnahan of Missouri; Mayor Emanuel Cleaver II of Kansas City, MO, and his wife, Dianne; Bob Holden, Missouri State treasurer; and Bob Griffin, speaker, Missouri House of Representatives.

## Remarks in a Town Meeting on Health Care in Kansas City *April 7, 1994*

*Wendall Anschutz.* Welcome to News 5's town hall meeting with President Bill Clinton. Tonight the President joins us to talk about the health care crisis in our country and his plans to reform the health care system. It's a rare opportunity for people in the Midwest to talk face to face about their concerns. So, ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the President of the United States.

*The President.* Thank you, Wendall, and thank you, Ann. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen here in Kansas City and those in Tulsa, Topeka, and Omaha, who are also joining us.

I came here tonight to talk to you a little bit about my hopes for health care reform for America and to listen and learn from you and to try to answer your questions. I'd like to make a brief opening statement, if I might, and sort of summarize what is in our administration's health care proposal.

Let me begin by saying that I have been interested in health care a long time. My mother was a nurse anesthetist. I grew up around hospitals. I watched health care change and diversify. I was an attorney general when I had to fight for the rights of our elderly people in nursing homes in my State. And then for a dozen years I was a Governor, when I saw, every year, our State have to pay more and more and more in Medicaid program—that's the

Government's program for poor folks and for elderly people in nursing homes—oftentimes paying 2 and 3 and 4 times the rate of inflation for the same health care.

I have, in the last 4 years, since long before I ever thought about running for President, talked to literally thousands of doctors and nurses and health care professionals and families who have been dislocated by the health care system. And I decided that we had to do something about it for the following reasons. And let me just try to set them out for you.

First of all, our country is the only advanced country in the world that doesn't provide health care security for all of its citizens. All the countries we compete with, all the wealthier countries, provide health security. Only the United States does not do that. And we pay a dear price for it.

We're a nation of about 255 million people. At any given time, 39 million of us are uninsured. In every year, 58 million are uninsured. Eighty-one million Americans live in families where there's somebody with a so-called pre-existing condition, where there's been a child with diabetes or a daddy with a heart attack or a mother that's had cancer. And what that means is that they can't either get insurance or they pay much more than anybody else, or