

This unfunded mandates is one. Welfare reform is another. How we're going to lower the deficit and provide tax relief is another. There are major positive issues that we're going to have to face. We don't need to reopen an issue and make it worse. So I ask you to help us on that.

Now, let me say one final thing about the baseball strike, if I might. I asked Bill Usery, the Federal mediator, to get the sides back together and report to me by February 6th. Anybody know what February 6th is? It's Babe Ruth's 100th birthday. So it struck me as a good day to settle the baseball strike. I identify with Babe Ruth. He's a little overweight. [Laughter] And he struck out a lot—[laughter]—but he hit a lot of home runs because he went to bat. You are the people in this country who go to bat. You have to deal directly with people. You have to be accountable, not only for the rhetoric of your speeches but the reality of your actions.

And so I ask you to take this opportunity to join with us, and let's make the decision the American people made last November a good decision by making it one of shared responsibility. Let's move what we can back to the State and local level. Let's work to empower people. Let's reduce the burden of Government and increase the opportunity it creates. We can do these things, but it is very important that we not fix what ain't broke and that we not become diverted by issues that can only divide us when there is so much we can do that will bring us together.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:36 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Victor Ashe of Knoxville, TN, president, U.S. Conference of Mayors, and Mayor Rolland R. Grant of East Providence, RI.

Remarks on Welfare Reform

January 28, 1995

Good morning. I am on my way to Blair House to host an all-day meeting that is a bipartisan working session on welfare reform. We will have Members of Congress, Governors, and local officials there from all across our country. I am determined to work with them to pass welfare reform. I think it is perhaps the most pressing social problem we face in our country, and the time has come for Congress to act.

As I said in the State of the Union, what we need in welfare reform is a New Covenant of opportunity and responsibility. People on welfare who can work should go to work. Parents who owe child support should pay it. Governments don't raise children; people do. And we must have a national campaign against teenage pregnancy and births outside marriage.

If we're going to end welfare, let's do it right. We should require work and responsibility, but we shouldn't cut people off just because they're poor or young or unmarried. We should promote responsibility by requiring young mothers to live at home or in proper supervised settings and to finish school. But we shouldn't put them or their children out on the street. I have

worked on this issue since 1980. I know that the people who want to change welfare most are those who are trapped on it.

Yesterday, in preparation for this meeting, I met with four former welfare mothers who have managed to free themselves from the system. I listened again to the stories of people who have had great difficulty in trying to get the kind of support they need to get off of welfare, people who did not want to go on in the first place and were anxious to be off of it. I know that most people who are trapped in welfare will gladly take the work options if we can work out the system in the proper way. I also know that those who don't want to do the responsible thing must be required to do so.

But our job in the end is not to tear anybody down and not to use this issue to divide America, but to build people up, to liberate them, to give them the capacity they need to compete and win in this new economy. The American people want us to put politics aside and to get this done for our country. I am committed to doing it, and I believe the people who are com-

ing to this meeting this morning are committed as well.

Wish us well. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:12 a.m. at the South Portico of the White House.

The President's Radio Address

January 28, 1995

Good morning. I want to talk to you today about the New Covenant I discussed in the State of the Union. My mission as President is to restore the American dream to all of our people. In the new economy of the 21st century, that requires a New Covenant between the people and their Government and among the people themselves.

This is something I've been talking about for many years, since I ran for President. The New Covenant is grounded in an old idea that all Americans have not just a right but a responsibility to do the hard work needed to rise as far as their talents and determination can take them and to give something back to their community and to their country in return. Opportunity and responsibility, they go hand in hand. We can't have one without the other, and we can't have a strong community without both.

We've worked hard to create more economic opportunity for our people in the last 2 years, bringing the deficit down, investing in education and new technology, expanding trade. We've gotten more than 6 million—or almost 6 million new jobs, the fastest growth in 10 years, and the lowest combined rate of unemployment and inflation in 25 years. That's good news.

But America's still got a lot of problems. There are still interests of people and values of people that are not being furthered. And there's really no better example of the need for us to build a New Covenant together than the failed welfare system. Today's welfare system doesn't provide enough opportunity, and it certainly doesn't require enough responsibility. It's a system so badly broken that it undermines the very values, work, family, and responsibility, people must have to put themselves back on track. We've got to return those values front and center. Our job in Government is to expand opportunity, not bureaucracy, and then to empower people to make the most of their own lives. We must not ask, and Government should

not provide, what we really must do for ourselves.

I've worked on this issue of welfare reform for a very long time now, since I first became Governor of Arkansas over 15 years ago. I know there are a lot of different ideas about what we should do. But everyone agrees the system is broken and it needs to be fixed. I'm committed to making welfare what it was meant to be, a second chance, not a way of life. I'm committed to making sure that the only goal of the welfare system is to help people get off of it, into a job where they can support themselves and their families. I believe we should give people the opportunity to move from dependence to independence, providing job training and child care if that's what they need for up to 2 years. At the same time, we must demand that people accept responsibility for themselves. After 2 years, anyone who can work must work. And if a parent doesn't pay child support, that person should be forced to pay. People who have children must be prepared to take responsibility for them.

We should require work and responsibility, but we shouldn't cut people off just because they're poor or young or unmarried. We should promote responsibility by requiring young mothers to live at home with their parents or in appropriate supervised settings and to finish school, but we shouldn't put them and their children on the street. I don't believe we should punish people because they happen to be poor or because of past mistakes. And absolutely, we shouldn't punish children for their parents' mistakes. All of us have made our mistakes, and none of us can change our yesterdays. But every one of us can change our tomorrows. That's what welfare reform should be all about.

And one more thing, Washington doesn't have all the answers. In fixing welfare, as on so many other issues, we have to shift resources and decisionmaking back to States and local commu-