

Nation, people who continue to come to the present day. We perhaps have many to give back. Some are perhaps financial in nature, but maybe the most important thing we could give to Ireland and, indeed, to a very troubled world today is the example of what is possible when people find unity and strength in their diversity.

We know from our own hard experience, from the blood we have shed on our own land, from the struggles we have been engaged in for a long time and the joys that we draw every day from the increasing diversity of our people, that strength can be drawn from differences, differences which are celebrated, respected, ap-

preciated. That kind of strength can build a future worthy of all the people of Northern Ireland.

Tonight our hopes and our prayers are with all the people of Ireland and especially with you, Mr. Prime Minister, and with your fine wife and your family. We loved having you here. We love every St. Patrick's Day, but this one especially we will remember above the rest.

Thank you. Godspeed.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

## The President's Radio Address

*March 18, 1995*

Good morning. This morning I want to talk about responsibility, the responsibility all parents have to support their children. I'm pleased to be joined by Gerri Jensen, the president of the leading child support enforcement group in America, along with six other conscientious parents who have struggled to raise their children without the child support they were entitled to.

Our generation, at the end of the 20th century, has two great responsibilities: first, to keep the American dream alive and well for all our children and, second, to help our country remain the strongest force for freedom and democracy in the world. We can't do that if we don't have strong families and responsible parenting.

In Washington we're having a great debate about what we ought to do here to support these goals. On one side is the old Washington view that big, bureaucratic, one-size-fits-all Government can provide big solutions to America's big problems. On the other side is the new extreme view that Government is the source of all our problems and if we just get rid of it every problem would go away as well.

I've got a different view based on practical experience. I think we have to chart a course between the old way of big Government and the new rage of no Government. I think Government's job is to expand opportunity while shrinking bureaucracy, to get more jobs and higher incomes with less burden from Govern-

ment, to empower people to make the most of their own lives through more education and training and technology and support for families and for work, and to enhance our security on our streets and around the world.

To achieve these ends, the Federal Government has to be a partner, a partner with the private sector, with State and local governments, with individual citizens to strengthen our communities, a partner in promoting opportunity and at the same time demanding more responsibility. That's what the New Covenant is all about.

Nowhere is the lack of values, the lack of opportunity and responsibility more apparent than in our own failed welfare system. We all agree we have to end welfare as we know it. I think to do it we'll have to offer more opportunity to move people from welfare to work and demand more responsibility in return, to have a requirement that anyone on welfare who can work must go to work, and to discourage irresponsible behavior that lands people on welfare in the first place by insisting on tougher child support enforcement and responsible parenting. We have to make responsibility a way of life.

I've been working on this issue for the last 15 years. Last year I sent Congress a sweeping welfare reform plan. Congress didn't act last year, but I applaud the new Republican majority and the Democrats, both of them, for making

welfare reform a priority this year. Meanwhile, in the last 2 years, we've cut through Federal redtape to give 26 States, more than half the country, the authority to conduct their own welfare reform experiments. And Republicans and Democrats now agree on tougher child support enforcement. They all agree that we have to have national action on tougher child support enforcement because 30 percent or more of the child support cases that are delinquent cross State boundaries.

I've worked hard on this. Since I've been President, child support collections are up substantially. And I just issued a tough Executive order to crack down on delinquency by Federal employees.

If deadbeat parents paid all the child support they should in this country, we could immediately move over 800,000 mothers and children off welfare. Let me say that again: If deadbeat parents paid the child support they owe, we could move immediately over 800,000 mothers and children off welfare. This goes way beyond welfare. Millions of children of working parents would have more secure lives and much brighter futures if the errant parents, absent parents, paid what they owe.

The welfare reform plan I sent to Congress last year included five key provisions for tough child support enforcement: employer reporting of new hires to catch deadbeats who move from job to job, uniform interstate child support laws, computerized statewide collection to speed up payments, streamlined efforts to identify the father in every case, and tough new penalties, like driver's license revocation.

These reforms will work. According to a report issued today by the Department of Human Services—of Health and Human Services, if we crack down on deadbeat parents by making these five provisions the law all over America, child support collections would go up by \$24 billion in the next 10 years.

I am pleased that the House Republicans have come our way on these child support enforcement issues. They have included four of the five steps I proposed in their welfare bill. But I think the fifth step is crucial as well. Our plan calls on States to deny driver's licenses and professional licenses to people who refuse to pay the money they owe for their own children. Nineteen States are doing that today, and they're collecting a lot more child support as a result.

So I hope the House Republicans will take a look at these new findings and join us to send deadbeat parents all across this country a loud signal: If you neglect your responsibility to support your children, we'll suspend your license, garnish your pay, track you down, and make you pay.

Eighteen years ago, Gerri Jensen's husband abandoned her and her two young sons. She held down several low-paying jobs but eventually was forced to turn to welfare because her ex-husband stopped paying child support altogether. She got so fed up with weak laws and bureaucratic runarounds that she launched a grassroots movement to crack down on deadbeat parents nationwide. We are all in her debt, and we all owe an obligation to all the people like her in America who are doing their dead-level best to be good parents. They deserve our support.

Gerri Jensen stood up and fought to make our laws reflect our values. No parent has a right to walk away from responsibility to his or her children. Now, if we work together, we can make this kind of responsibility the law of our land.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:23 p.m. on March 17 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 18.

## Statement on Proposed Line-Item Veto Legislation

*March 20, 1995*

The Senate is now debating the line-item veto legislation which passed last month in the House. I urge the Senate to pass the strongest

possible line-item veto and to make it effective immediately. If the Members of Congress from both parties are serious about cutting the deficit,