

times do we see conflicts within our own borders from people who believe they can only be successful if someone else is failing?

You have believed, always, there was a public interest, there were shared values, there were common goals, we could go up together. That is what America needs now. We need it in thinking about our own problems. We need it in looking out to the world. We need to behave as citizens the way you behave as members of this organization. We need to give, because when we give, we get; because we're better off if we're all doing better. We dare not define our success in life by someone else's failure.

So I say to you, keep doing what you're doing. But when you go home and when you continue this conversation, think about how many examples there are of the point I have made to you today. And think about all the wonderful opportunities the world affords us. I believe

America's best days are still ahead. We have only to figure out how to get the benefits of these fantastic new changes without bearing the burdens of the forces of disintegration. It will not happen unless we believe in the public interest, unless we believe in the human ties that bind us, and unless we join hands to work together. That is the wisdom you have to give to the rest of America, and I ask you to do your very best to impart it.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. at the Beverly Wilshire Regent. In his remarks, he referred to Peter Gold, 1995 Jewish Federation campaign chairman, and his wife, Gloria; Irwin Field, Jewish Federation president, and his wife, Helgar; Lew Wasserman, chairman and CEO, MCA, Inc., and his wife, Edie; and entertainer Barbra Streisand.

Remarks to Working Women *April 10, 1995*

Thank you, Marina. Thank you for having the courage to come up here and give that speech. For those of us who do it every day it may seem normal, but I couldn't help realizing what a brave thing it was for her to come up here and just stand in front of all of you and speak so eloquently and powerfully. And I know a lot of you who are out here representing working women in so many different walks of life identified with everything she had to say, so maybe you ought to give her another hand. [*Applause*]

Thank you, Karen Nussbaum, for the outstanding job you do. And thank you, Secretary Reich, for being the conscience of all working Americans in this administration. And thank you, Hillary, for being a good symbol of that.

This is an issue that's very important to me personally. My grandmother was a working woman from the 1930's on. My mother was a working woman from the 1940's on. It never occurred to me from the first day I met Hillary that we would not have a two-worker home. And as she told those village women—even in Bangladesh, now they know that, until I became

President, she always made more money than I did. [*Laughter*]

The interesting thing to me about this issue is that it really reflects the larger dilemmas of our society today. We want to have opportunities open for women to work and to fulfill their own dreams, and surely that is one of the things that drives women into the work force. But it's also true that a lot of women work even under the most difficult circumstances simply because they have to. And in either case, what we should want for women is to be able to be successful in the workplace and successful in the home.

This afternoon—as you heard, I got all these letters from all across the country; I want to read you just a couple. A working mother from Milwaukee said, “Between balancing home and working a job, you always feel like you're doing four things at once. You're doing your job, but you're thinking about what you're going to cook for supper and who's going to pick up the kids.” A 34-year-old woman put it this way: “Being a working woman is like having two full-time jobs. We're expected to be perfect in both career and taking care of the home, but without adequate compensation for either.” [*Laughter*]

As the son, as I said, the grandson, and the husband of working women, I hear these voices. I hear you. The 60 million American women who work do deserve a better deal. The recommendations that I have received we are committed to putting into action.

If you think about the great challenges facing America today, resolving the dilemmas of working women are critical to our meeting them. Women want to be treated as assets to be developed in the workplace, not costs to be cut. They deserve to work in an environment that treats them with dignity, respects the value of their families, and invests in their skills and their future. This is not just the fair and decent thing to do, it is the smart thing to do for America.

More and more as I serve in this office, it becomes clearer to me that the decent thing to do is the smart thing to do; that over and over and over again, all the new opportunities that this age offers us require us to fight against the temptation to take the shortcut, to take the easy way out, to hold the wages down, to deny the benefits, to deny the importance of raising children while being in the workplace. What is in our interest over the long run is to take advantage of all these rapid changes which are going on in our society and still allow people to have some stability, some order, some pace in their lives so that they can raise their children and honor their marriages and grow as people at work and after work. That, it seems to me, is a fundamental mission that this society—not this administration, this society—should be pursuing.

My mother worked for over 30 years, and she was always proud of what she did. And because we had two workers in the family, we always did pretty well. There are a lot of women out there now raising their children alone, and a lot of others in two-worker families where one or the other seems to be always out of a job because of all the changes that are going on today.

Then there are a lot of people who just have circumstances that are downright almost unimaginable. I never will forget the last race I made for Governor of my State. I always made a habit of going to a factory in the northern part of Arkansas, because they had the earliest factory gate in the State; everybody had to show up between 4 and a quarter to 5, everybody. And I was there at 4:30 one morning, and a pickup truck pulled up. And in this pickup truck

with one seat, there was a husband, a wife, and three little kids. And I saw the mother get out, and go to work at 4:30 in the morning. And I asked the father—I went over to the father, and I said, “How do you deal with this?” He said, “Well, I don’t have to be at work until 6:30. But,” he said, “my kids can’t go to school until 7:30 or even to day care. So I had to find someone else to take my kids between 6 in the morning when I have to leave and the rest of the time. And we have to get them all up every day so we can drop their mother off, because we can’t have anybody coming to our house.”

This sounds like an extreme example, but a lot of you sitting in this audience have other examples that are just as difficult. This is the fact of life in America today.

Recently in Atlanta, I was down there for an economic conference, and I met a woman who ran a day care center who told me about all of the problems that the children were having from time to time. And she told me that she had a young boy who one day at lunchtime missed his mother so much, and she could not get off of work and come see him at the day care center. And he was crying and crying. So she suggested that he should draw a picture of his mother, and that would make him miss his mother less. So the boy drew a picture of his mother, but then he taped it to the chair next to his, and he wouldn’t let anybody else sit in the chair all day long. [Laughter] He sat with his mother all day long at the day care center.

I know that if we lived in other countries we would have other problems. I know that America still has more opportunities for women than most societies. And I know that most of us are doing the best we can and most of you will do very well and your children will grow up fine. But I also know that we cannot become the society we want to be as we move into the next century unless we address the problems that came out of what these 250,000 women said to me when we asked all of you what the state of life was like in America today. Working women must count.

You know, we’ve already made a down payment. The First Lady mentioned the family and medical leave law. When I went home to Arkansas about a week ago and I went to my church—and the first person I met at my church was a woman I didn’t know. She came out, and

she said, "If you hadn't signed that family leave law, my family would have been ruined, because I got sick. And my husband and I were able to deal with that, and he could take some time off to deal with me, and neither one of us lost our jobs." It has made a difference. And I'd like to say to all those who said it was a terrible thing, it would bring down the job growth of the American economy and ruin small business: You were wrong. This was the right thing to do.

Our efforts to immunize all of the children in this country, to expand Head Start, to do what we can to expand child care, to strengthen child support enforcement, all these things are important to help you succeed, as people, as workers, as parents. But there is more that we should do. I have heard the recommendations. We cannot be satisfied until every person in this country has a chance to make the most of her God-given abilities.

You recommended and I have proposed giving a tax deduction for all expenses for education after high school. That's very important. You know, most adults have to change jobs now during a lifetime, and many can be out of work for a long time, and many will not be able to get jobs paying what their old jobs paid unless they can get more education. This is a terribly important thing. I've said this over and over again, but the community colleges in our country may be the most important institutions in America today as we try to get into the 21st century, because they're handy, they're flexible, they change, they're driven by the local markets, and they're open to everybody. And we have to do what we can to increase the availability of education, not simply for working people to be able to provide it for their children but to be able to have it for themselves as well.

You recommended and I also support streamlining the Federal job training programs. Now, there are 60 or 70 different job training programs, and I'm sure there was some reason that they were all passed separately. But today, most of you know where you need to go to get better training and education. So we want to collapse those, put them into a big pool, and let them become vouchers for unemployed people or very low-wage workers, so you can just use the money where you see fit, for a year and sometimes for 2 years, if you need it to get further education and training.

You recommended and I support expanding more affordable loans for college students through the direct loan program. This will be very important to a lot of you and to a lot of your children. If a person borrows money to go to college, they ought never to be discouraged from going or from staying because of the burden of the loan. Under our proposal, you not only can get the loan at a more affordable rate but you can pay it back as a percentage of your income, so you'll never go broke trying to pay your college loan back. That's an important thing to America's women.

Finally, you recommended and I support raising the minimum wage. I am very tired of hearing people say the only people on minimum wage are upper class college students who live with their wealthy parents and they don't need it. The other day on one of the local news programs, I was doing my little channel surfing and I saw they were doing a series on the minimum wage. And they went down to some town, I think it was in Virginia, and they interviewed a lady working for the minimum wage. She looked to be about my age. And the television reporter says, "Well, ma'am, they say here in your factory that if the minimum wage is raised, that there will be fewer jobs. You might lose your job." She looked at the television reporter, and she said, "Honey, I'll take my chances." [Laughter]

I don't believe you can support yourself and raise a child or more than a child on \$8,500 a year. And we now have a—several years ago, we indexed the income taxes of the country so people weren't punished for making higher incomes with higher taxes. Now people in the Congress want to index the capital gains tax to protect the capital gains against inflation, and they want to index the defense budget to protect that against inflation. Why in the wide world wouldn't we want to protect against inflation the people who are working harder for the lowest money with kids to raise and a country to build? We ought to do this. It is time to do this.

So, we've got a lot to do. You've given us some good recommendations. I also want to say that there are a lot of people who would like to be working women who aren't—people on welfare. There's a lot of talk in this town now about reforming the welfare system, and I am for it. I was pleased to hear the Speaker last

Friday say that he really wanted to get welfare reform out.

But let us recognize what real welfare reform would be. It would be turning people who are permanently dependent into permanently successful workers who also are successful parents. That should be the goal of welfare reform. We should not punish people for the sins they committed in the past. Instead, we should say, we will help you if you will behave responsibly in the future as parents, as students, and as workers. If that is the focus of this welfare reform, believe me, there's a lot of reform that needs to be done.

Everybody in this society, we ought to have the same goal for. And someday we ought to be able to have a meeting like this where men and women all have exactly the same problems and exactly the same opportunities, because what our goal should be is that all of us should be able to live up to our God-given capacities, to follow our dreams, and to succeed as citizens, as parents, and as workers. And unless we can

do that, the American dream will not mean the same thing in the 21st century as it does today.

For all the wonderful things that are going on, all the millions of jobs we have created, the fact that now we have more new businesses created every year than before, we've got more new millionaires every year than before, that's a good thing. But the world is changing so fast, there are a lot of people that are getting caught at the breaking points, and we've got to have an institutional response to give people the sense that they can preserve their families and preserve some order and stability in their lives, even as they are changing.

Every one of you is entitled to that. That's what you are entitled to. And if you really count, that's what your country will give you.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:14 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to working mother Marina Foley and Karen Nussbaum, Director of the Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor.

Message on the Observance of Passover, 1995

April 10, 1995

Warm greetings to all who are observing Passover.

A celebration of both liberation and spring, Passover is a special opportunity to give thanks for the blessings of freedom and to remember the faith that sustains us in our bleakest hours. During this holiday, millions of Jews around the world draw inspiration from the example of the Israelites, who preserved their beliefs, their culture, and their dignity throughout the brutal

winter of slavery. When the warm spring of freedom finally came, the Jewish people rebuilt their community and thrived, ultimately infusing every corner of the earth with a powerful commitment to faith and family.

This year, let the Passover holiday remind us of the hope that can sustain us as a people. Hillary joins me in extending best wishes to all for a meaningful Passover.

BILL CLINTON

Message on the Observance of Easter, 1995

April 10, 1995

Warmest greetings to everyone observing Easter Sunday.

On this day of great hope and promise, Christians the world over celebrate God's redemptive grace as manifested in the life and teachings

of Jesus of Nazareth. This day symbolizes the victory of good over evil, hope over despair, and life over death. Rejoicing in the miracle of Easter, we pledge anew to hold in our hearts Christ's message of peace and joy.