

people, they can inflame people. There are all these wonderful, wonderful Americans who grow tobacco like their families have been growing it for 100 and 200 years. But they can terrify them, and they will give them all kinds of propaganda about how you're going to drive them into the dirt, and those people will become a political force against you. And all the Americans who agree with you, they'll find some other reason to be against you. That's why people don't ever take on organized interests. So don't you be—you've already been the first President to take on the NRA; for goodness sakes, don't take on the tobacco companies, everybody else gave that one a pass."

But we knew 2 things after 14 months of study. We knew, number one, that for 30 years some of these companies have known that tobacco was addictive and dangerous and that they were consciously marketing it to children. And the second thing we knew was that 3,000 kids a day begin to smoke, and 1,000 of them will end their lives early.

So finally, we decided, how in God's name can we walk away from this? A thousand kids a day living a better, fuller, longer life is worth any amount of political sacrifice. It is the right thing to do.

There's so many other things like this that I could tell you about, but you get the idea. This is a great country. I do not want you to be upset about what you think is going on in Washington; I want you to be determined to do what you think is best for America, consistent with our values.

This debate was inevitable, as inevitable as the sun coming up in the morning, because of the depth of the changes that are going on. Because we're changing the way we work, we're changing the way we live, we have to change the way we do government. This was inevitable.

Don't you forget—we've been around for nearly 220 years now because most of the time when the chips are down, the American people do the right thing. And we come out pretty good.

I was born nearly 50 years ago to a widowed mother in a State where the per capita income was barely half the national average. My granddaddy raised me til I was 4. He had a sixth grade education. And I got to be President, not because I was so smart or so good or because I worked like crazy—because there are hundreds of people like me in this country and hundreds of people all over the world. America made that possible. America said, no matter who you are, here's a chance at an education. No matter who you are, here's a chance at a job. No matter who you are, you can run for office. No matter who you are, you can go anywhere and stand up for what you believe in. This is a very great country, and every one of you should be happy and proud that you happen to be alive at this period of profound change. If we do our job, the best is yet to come.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:32 p.m. at the Century Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to actor Tom Hanks and Ashley Ballard, who sang the national anthem.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Transportation Department Reports *September 21, 1995*

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith the 1994 calendar year reports as prepared by the Department of Transportation on activities under the Highway Safety Act, the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966, and the Motor Vehicle

Information and Cost Savings Act of 1972, as amended.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 21, 1995.