

July 16 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

fails to enact welfare reform legislation. I far prefer a bill passed by Congress, and I know you do too. So let's agree: One way or another we will make work and responsibility the law of the land, but we want a good welfare reform bill.

Ten years ago at an NGA meeting in Hilton Head, South Carolina, I heard testimony from a woman from Little Rock, a woman who had moved from welfare to work through our State's work program. She told us, "The best thing about work is not the check. The best thing is when my boy goes to school and they ask him, what does your mama do for a living, he can give an answer."

Well, today, 10 years later, that lady has a job, and she's raised three children. One has a job, and two are in school. By her undying effort and her unbreakable spirit she shows us that we can make a difference, that this cycle of welfare can be broken, that welfare can be a second chance, not a way of life.

So let me say in closing that we can meet all our challenges if we'll work in this way and if we'll follow the example of the NGA: be bipartisan, cooperative, look for results, not abstract rhetoric, not be ashamed to learn from each other and take our best ideas from each other, and putting our values to work. That's how we can reform welfare and meet our other challenges. If we do that, this country will enter the 21st century stronger and more vibrant than ever before, with the American dream alive for all our people.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 11:20 a.m. from Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building to the NGA conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin and Gov. Bob Miller of Nevada.

Memorandum on the Work Requirements Initiative

July 16, 1996

Memorandum for the Secretary of Health and Human Services

Subject: Work Requirements Initiative

I hereby direct you, in order to move people from welfare to work, to exercise your legal authority to propose a regulation that would require all welfare participants in the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program to sign a personal responsibility plan for working within 2 years. After 2 years, any such

JOBS participant who refuses to work, even though a job is available, will be sanctioned by loss of her AFDC benefits.

Welfare reform is first and foremost about work. People who are able to work should be expected to go to work. This proposed regulation will dramatically change expectations for welfare recipients and welfare agencies, ensuring that finding work quickly becomes their primary goal.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks to the United States Agricultural Communicators Congress

July 16, 1996

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for that warm welcome. And I was listening to Dan Glickman say all those outrageously positive things, and it reminded me that that was a living example of Clinton's third law of politics, which is, when-

ever possible, be introduced by someone you've appointed to high position. [*Laughter*]

Steve and I were talking up here; he said, "You know, the last time I was on a platform with you, you fell through a hole in it." And it's really true. It was—what was it—a soybean