

to be willing to experiment, to try to work to find ways to break the cycle of dependency that keeps dragging folks down.

And I think the States are going to find out pretty quickly that they're going to have to be willing to invest something in these people to make sure that they can go to work in the ways that I suggested.

Yes, one last question.

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned Senator Moynihan. Have you spoken to him or other congressional leaders, especially congressional Democrats? And what was the conversation and the reaction to your indication?

The President. Well, I talked to him as recently, I think, as about a week ago. When we went up to meet with the TWA families, we talked about it again. And you know, I have an enormous amount of respect for him. And he has been a powerful and cogent critic of this whole move. I'll just have to hope that in this one case I'm right and he's wrong, because I have an enormous regard for him. And I've spoken to a number of other Democrats, and some think I'm right and some don't.

This is a case where, you know, I have been working with this issue for such a long time, a long time before it became—to go back to Mr. Hume's [Brit Hume, ABC News] question—a long time before it became a cause celebre in Washington or anyone tried to make it a partisan political issue. It wasn't much of a political hot potato when I first started working on it. I just was concerned that the system didn't

seem to be working. And I was most concerned about those who were trapped on it and their children and the prospect that their children would be trapped on it.

I think we all have to admit here—we all need a certain level of humility today. We are trying to continue a process that I've been pushing for 3½ years. We're trying to get the legal changes we need in Federal law that will work to move these folks to a position of independence where they can support their children and their lives as workers and in families will be stronger.

But if this were an easy question, we wouldn't have had the 2½-hour discussion with my advisers today and we'd all have a lot more answers than we do. But I'm convinced that we're moving in the right direction. I'm convinced it's an opportunity we should seize. I'm convinced that we have to change the two problems in this bill that are not related to welfare reform, that were just sort of put under the big shade of the tree here, that are part of this budget strategy with which I disagree. And I'm convinced when we bring those things out into the light of day we will be able to do it. And I think some Republicans will agree with us, and we'll be able to get what we need to do to change it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:27 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House.

Statement on Health Care Legislation July 31, 1996

Today we have apparently achieved a long overdue victory for the millions of Americans who live in fear of losing their health insurance when they change or lose their jobs or because of preexisting conditions. I hope all Democrats

and Republicans will work together to pass this important legislation before the Congress begins its August recess.