

Today, over half of all American workers share this important benefit, people like Christy Sens, a first-grade teacher from Fairfax, Virginia, who is here with me today. Christy was among the first Americans to make use of the new family leave law in 1993 when she and her husband were expecting their first child. She thought she would be forced to choose between the 6 weeks her school allowed her for new mothers or taking a whole year off without pay. Because of our new law, she was able to spend 12 full weeks at home recovering from her pregnancy and spending precious time with her new daughter. Christy used the benefit again in 1995 for the birth of her second child.

Family leave is not only family-friendly, it's employer-friendly as well. Also with me today is Stan Sorrell, president and CEO of the Calvert Group, an investment firm in Bethesda, Maryland, and two of his employees who have also used family leave. The Calvert Group started a family and medical leave program 3 years before it became the law of the land. Like almost 90 percent of the businesses covered by the law, they found that family leave is easy to administer and costs them little or nothing. So we know it's working for both families and businesses. After all, in these past 4 years, American business has created over 11 million new jobs, more than any other 4-year term in our history.

Now we must make it even easier for parents to live up to their responsibilities to their children and to their employers. Today I call upon Congress to expand the family leave law to give parents an additional 24 hours of unpaid leave each year to take a child or an elderly relative to a regular doctor's appointment or to attend parent-teacher conferences at school. In so doing, we'll make our families stronger and our workers more productive, building the kind of country and economy we all want for our children.

We also must address the fact that too many workers still do not know about the family leave law. That's why I'm pleased to announce that we're launching a multimedia public education campaign to spread the word about family leave to make sure employers and employees have the facts and to make sure everyone knows how to make this law work for them. It's simply not enough to help people have the tools to succeed; we also have to make sure they know what those tools are.

The centerpiece of this campaign is a new 800 number that any American can call to learn about family and medical leave. It's 1-800-959-FMLA. That's 1-800-959-FMLA. You can also get information through our Labor Department's website on the Internet: www.dol.gov. That's www.dol.gov.

By expanding family leave to cover children's doctor visits and parent-teacher conferences and by helping more Americans to learn about the opportunity of family leave, we can enable millions of more of our fellow citizens to meet their responsibilities both at home and at work. That's how we must prepare our people for a new century full of new promise and possibility.

As parents, teachers, and business people, as members of the work force and members of our communities, we all share a stake in the strength of our families. Our society can never be stronger than the children we raise or the families in which we raise them. That's why family leave is more than just a single issue or accomplishment. It is at the heart of our approach to preparing America for the 21st century by ensuring that we can all meet our obligations and make the most of our God-given gifts.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Death of Herb Caen *February 1, 1997*

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Herb Caen, the San Francisco Chronicle's legendary columnist, and we extend our

condolences to his family, friends, and most of all, the city he loved. Maybe it's not right to call an "institution" someone who deflated many

overstuffed institutions with a brisk three dots, but surely no one knew better the vibrancy and eccentricities of the city, his city, San Francisco, than did Herb Caen. If we listen carefully on those cool mornings when the fog has boiled through the Golden Gate, out beyond the clat-

tering of cables underfoot and the low moan of the horn at Alcatraz, maybe we will still hear Herb Caen's wonderful, witty, irrepressible voice. Herb Caen . . . he will be missed . . . a lot.

Remarks at the National Governors' Association Dinner February 2, 1997

Ladies and gentlemen, Governor and Mrs. Miller, Governor and Mrs. Voinovich, all the Governors and spouses and children and friends who are here, the leaders of the National Governors' Association, welcome back to the White House.

As all of you know, this is a very special dinner for Hillary and for me. I had to pinch myself this afternoon when I was preparing these notes—very elaborate—[laughter]—when I realized that this is the fifth time I have had the honor of hosting this dinner, which I also attended 12 times as a Governor.

Four years ago when you came here, I told you that I would do my best to chart a new course for our country, to give you a strong economy, a smaller and less obtrusive Federal Government, still one that could be very effective and innovative in dealing with the challenges before us and in forging a new partnership with the Governors to devolve more decisionmaking to the State level. Four years later, we can look back and see that that strategy has worked, thanks to your efforts and what all of us here have been able to do, working together.

Our economy is the strongest it's been in 30 years. Our Government is the smallest it's been since President Kennedy was here. Today one of our major newspapers carried a story chronicling the record decline in the welfare rolls over the last 4 years—2¼ million people—and at last giving the Governors and the States committed to welfare reform a share of the credit, along with the rising economy, for moving people from welfare to work. So this is a good time. Crime rates have dropped now for 5 years in a row, and we know now what to do to keep them coming down.

The main thing I want to say tonight is that we all, together, have an incredible opportunity, standing as we do on the edge of a new century, a new millennium, but also a profoundly different time in human affairs and standing at this point not only as the world's only superpower but one that is free of external threat and internal economic crisis, which means we have an opportunity almost unique in our history to think about not only what we need to do for our people today and tomorrow but what America needs 20 years from now, 50 years from now.

That is the sort of thing that people who were here before us thought about at the end of World War II, and the decisions they made gave us 50 pretty good years as Americans. Tuesday night, when I speak in the State of the Union Address, I'm going to ask the Congress to cross party lines with each other and with me and to think about how we can build the next 50 years for America, how we can bring about true excellence and complete opportunity in education, how we can finish the job of welfare reform so that everyone we are now requiring to work genuinely has the chance to work, how we can meet the other challenges that are before us. Many of them involve the leadership, the initiative, the strength and steadiness of our Nation's Governors.

And so I pledge to you to continue the partnership we've had, to try to deepen it, to try to enrich it, and beginning tomorrow, to try to continue to listen to you and to your concerns and to hear your advice. This has been a good 4 years for America. I look forward to the next 4. And I look forward to our continued partnership.

The National Governors' Association has been a unique and immensely valuable institution for