

regulations on the sale and distribution of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco and tobacco advertising that appeals to adolescents, to ensure that our schools and children are safe and drug-free, and to combat gangs and violence afflicting our youth.

I applaud your public remarks calling on the industry and broadcasters to reactivate the voluntary ban. I also commend your comments that the Federal Communications Commission has an obligation to consider any and all actions that would protect the public interest in the use of the public airwaves.

I urge the Commission to take all appropriate actions to explore what effects might ensue in light of the decision by manufacturers of hard liquor to abandon their long-standing voluntary ban on television advertising, specifically the impact on underage drinking.

We have made tremendous progress in recent years reducing the incidence of deaths due to drunk driving among our youth. We have taken

important steps including the increase in the 1980s in the drinking age to 21 and the passage of zero tolerance legislation for underage drinking and driving. But there is more to be done. Too many of our young people are dying in car crashes, and too many young people are starting to drink at an early age, leading to alcohol and other substance abuse problems.

I would appreciate your help and the help of the Commission in exploring the possible actions you could take to support our parents and children in response to the manufacturers' decision to break with the long and honorable tradition of not advertising on the broadcast medium.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This letter was sent to Reed E. Hundt, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks on April Fool's Day and an Exchange With Reporters April 1, 1997

The President. I came here today because I thought I should personally deliver some disturbing news. Mike McCurry has just made a fool of himself by taking an unfortunate fall on dimly lit steps here at the White House. We believe he may have torn a tendon in his upper right thigh, which could get him a 6-inch incision above the place where he's torn it, but we won't know for sure until he's been thoroughly examined. And so until we can bring him back to full health, Kris Engskov is going to do the daily briefing today. [Laughter] And he will be my Press Secretary during Mike's absence, and he has some truly disturbing things to comment on. And frankly, I do not have the courage to stand here and listen to what he's about to tell you. But I am responsible for all of it. [Laughter]

Q. Will his accent get in the way of his job?

The President. I thought we should have a Press Secretary that did not have an accent for the first time in 4 years. [Laughter]

Q. Is there a danger of Mr. McCurry getting his old job back?

The President. I think McCurry's job is in real danger now. [Laughter]

Q. Will he be taking narcotics, pain—[laughter]—

The President. Yes. And under the 25th amendment he has already signed his authority over to Kris Engskov. [Laughter]

Q. How come the pool wasn't notified earlier about this accident?

The President. It's because we're pretty sneaky around here. [Laughter]

Q. Was he using alcohol before he fell? [Laughter]

The President. And beer and wine. [Laughter] But only after he watched 4 hours of advertisements on television. He was shaking beyond all belief.

Q. What about controlling legal authority here?

The President. Well, Kris Engskov is, I'm reliably informed, still underage. [Laughter] I first met this man when he was 3 years old, in his grandfather's store. And he still looks like he's 3 years old to me. [Laughter]

Q. Sometimes acts like it.

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The President. That's right. Which makes him a perfect choice for the Presidential Press Secretary. [Laughter]

Mr. Engskov, this is your big chance. Don't blow it. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Press Assistant Kris Engskov.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Education *April 2, 1997*

The President. Let me welcome all of you here to the East Room of the White House today for this very important announcement and this important roundtable. And by extension, let me welcome Mayor Susan Hammer and the CEO of Netscape, Jim Barksdale, and others who are with us via satellite today from the Stonegate School in San Jose, California.

In my State of the Union Address, I said that the greatest step our country must take to prepare for the 21st century is to ensure that all of our people have the best education in the world, that every 8-year-old can read, that every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, that every 18-year-old can go on to college, that every American adult can continue to learn for a lifetime.

But the most important thing of all is that we know whether we are learning what we need to know. And that requires something America has put off doing for too long, the embracing of a genuine commitment to national standards of learning for our young people. I have challenged every State to embrace national standards and to participate in 1999 in an examination to see whether our children have met those standards for fourth graders in reading and eighth graders in math.

Today, America's largest school system and leaders of its most forward-leaning high-tech industries have joined together to put California alongside Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, and our military schools in the support of the national standards movement. I thank Delaine Eastin. I thank the 200 high-tech executives who have supported this. And I thank them for their pledge not just to announce their support today but to write every Governor, every school board, every State education leader and ask them to participate in the standards crusade.

It has been less than 2 months since I called on every State to adopt high national standards. Today, with California's endorsement, States and school systems that educate nearly 20 percent of America's schoolchildren are now on the road to measuring their students against those high standards. If any State understands the challenges we face in the 21st century in the global economy in an information age, it is surely California, our gateway to much of the world and the home of many of the industries that will shape our future.

California and all of you who are here today and all of those in California today have given powerful new momentum to the crusade for national education standards—education and business leaders, Republicans and Democrats and independents, people all committed to seeing politics stop at the schoolhouse door and America have no stopping place in tomorrow's world.

I want to thank everyone who has made this possible. I thank especially Secretary Riley for his work and the Vice President in particular for the work he did to put this group together today. This is a very, very happy day for me personally but, more importantly, for the cause of educational advancement and reform and standards.

And now I'd like to call on the California Superintendent of Public Education, Delaine Eastin, for any remarks you might like to make.
Delaine.

[At this point, the discussion began.]

The President. Jim, it's President Clinton. I'd like to thank you for being there and thank Congresswoman Lofgren and my good friend Mayor Susan Hammer.

I'd like to ask you to amplify just a moment on a point that John Doerr made when he was introducing you, when he pointed out that just