

must ensure that fruits and vegetables coming from abroad are as safe as those produced in the United States, especially as we upgrade our own domestic standards.

To help accomplish this task, I plan to send to the Congress proposed legislation that will require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to halt imports of fruits, vegetables, or other food from any foreign country whose food safety systems and standards are not on par with those of the United States. This legislation, which will be similar to existing law requiring the USDA to halt the importation of meat and poultry from such countries, will enable the FDA to prevent the importation of potentially unsafe foreign produce. My Fiscal Year 1999 budget will provide the necessary funds to enable the FDA to expand dramatically its international food inspection force. With this greatly increased ability to inspect food safety conditions abroad and at points of entry, the FDA will be able to determine when to halt the importation of fruits and vegetables from foreign countries.

Today, I hereby direct two administrative actions that will better ensure the safety of fruits and vegetables coming from abroad, while continuing to improve the safety of domestic produce.

First, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in partnership with the Secretary of Agriculture and in close cooperation with the agricultural community, to issue within 1 year from the date of this memorandum, guidance on good agricultural practices and good manufacturing practices for fruits and vegetables. This guidance should address ways to prevent potential sources of contamination, should

take into account differences in both crops and regions, and should address food safety issues throughout the food production and distribution system. By providing the first-ever specific safety standards for fruits and vegetables, the guidance will improve the agricultural and manufacturing practices of all those seeking to sell produce in the U.S. market. To ensure that this guidance has the widest possible effect, I also direct the development of coordinated outreach and educational activities.

Second, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Agriculture, to report back to me within 90 days from the date of this memorandum with a status report and complete schedule for the good agricultural and manufacturing practices, and a plan on how to improve the monitoring of agricultural and manufacturing practices abroad, to assist foreign countries to improve those practices where necessary, and to prevent the importation of unsafe produce, including by detecting unsafe food at the dock or border. I especially urge you to consider the best ways to target inspection and testing toward those areas where problems are most likely to occur.

In addition to taking these actions, you should accelerate whatever food safety research is necessary to support them. You should also call upon the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Labor, and other agencies as necessary, to provide you with assistance in achieving this goal. These steps, taken together and in coordination with the proposed legislation I will send to the Congress, will improve the safety of fruits and vegetables for all Americans.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Statement on the National Economy *October 3, 1997*

Today the Labor Department announced more good news for America's workers and their families. Real wages are rising, the American economy has created 13.2 million new jobs since the beginning of my administration, and for the first time in 24 years, the unemployment rate has remained at or below 5 percent for 6 consecutive months. We have the most solid Amer-

ican economy in a generation, with strong investment, low unemployment, and low inflation.

While the economy is strong, we still have more to do to keep the American jobs machine on the move and ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to benefit from our growing economy. We must continue our three-part economic strategy that is helping move America

forward. We must ensure fiscal responsibility for future generations. We must continue to invest and expect the most of our people through initiatives such as national education test standards. And Congress must provide traditional trade ne-

gotiating authority so we can reach fair trade agreements with other countries, breaking down trade barriers to American goods, and creating high-paying jobs for American workers.

Statement on Crime Statistics

October 3, 1997

Today the Federal Bureau of Investigation released its final crime statistics for 1996, and the results are good news for all Americans. We are finally—and decisively—tipping the scales of justice in favor of law-abiding Americans. Overall crime is down for the fifth year in a row, with the biggest reductions coming in violent crime (6 percent)—and especially murders (9 percent). Reported rapes, robberies, assaults, and all types of property crimes are down from the previous year. Even the arrest rate for violent juveniles, which had skyrocketed for 7 years, has now gone down for 2 years in a row.

For 5 years, my administration has worked with police, prosecutors, school principals, and community leaders on a tough, smart crime strategy to attack violent crime. Together, we have fought for more police in our communities, fewer guns on our streets, tougher punishment for violent offenders, and better opportunities for our kids. Today's crime statistics show that, armed with these tools, we are moving in the right direction.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 3 but was embargoed for release until 9 a.m. on October 4.

The President's Radio Address

October 4, 1997

Good morning. Today I want to talk about our responsibility for raising our children and strengthening our families. Six years ago yesterday, when I announced that I would seek the Presidency, I said that our greatness depends upon our ability to create opportunity for all, get responsibility from all, and build a community of all Americans; and that the role of Government was to give our people the tools and establish the environment that would enable them to build that kind of America. I also said that nothing would ever replace the fundamental role of citizens' responsibility.

That is nowhere more important than when it comes to the family. The family is the cornerstone of our society. It unites us across all our faiths. This week, for example, Jewish parents at Rosh Hashana say a blessing for the family and over their children. The United States

Catholic Conference has noted, "The most important work to help our children is done quietly—in our homes and neighborhoods, in our parishes and community organizations. No government can love a child and no policy can substitute for a family's care, but clearly," the Catholic Conference has noted, "families can be helped or hurt" by the actions of government.

Here we have tried to help families. From improving our schools to helping parents reconcile the demands of work and childrearing, to expanding access to college and health care, to punishing domestic violence, families have always been at the heart of our concerns. We have worked hard to help parents take responsibility for their children and even to require that as much as we can.