

Jan. 16 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

expanded, and strengthened. We will continue working with our friends and allies to develop comprehensive, effective measures to promote democracy in Cuba.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Action on Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

January 16, 1998

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to subsection 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–114), (the “Act”), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond February 1, 1998, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, House Committee on International Relations; and Robert L. Livingston, chairman, House Committee on Appropriations.

The President’s Radio Address

January 17, 1998

Good morning. Today I want to talk about the steps we must take to protect our children and the public health from one of the greatest threats they face, tobacco. For years, tobacco companies have sworn they do not market their deadly products to children, but this week disturbing documents came to light that confirm our worst suspicions.

For years, one of our Nation’s biggest tobacco companies appears to have singled out our children, carefully studying their habits and pursuing a marketing strategy designed to prey on their insecurities in order to get them to smoke.

Let me read you two of the most startling lines from an internal tobacco company presentation proposing a marketing campaign targeted at children as young as 14. Quote, “Our strategy becomes clear: direct advertising appeal to younger smokers.” Younger smokers, this document says also, and I quote, “represent tomorrow’s cigarette business.” The message of these documents is all too clear: Marketing to children sells cigarettes.

Today I want to send a very different message to those who would endanger our children:

Young people are not the future of the tobacco industry; they are the future of America. And we must take immediate, decisive action to protect them.

We know that every day 3,000 young people will start smoking, and 1,000 of them will die prematurely due to tobacco-related disease. We know that 90 percent of adults who smoke—90 percent—began using tobacco before the age of 18. That is why, starting in 1995, we launched a historic nationwide effort with the FDA to stop our children from smoking before they start, reducing their access to tobacco products and severely restricting tobacco companies from advertising to young people. The balanced budget agreement I signed into law last summer includes a \$24 billion children’s health initiative, providing health coverage to up to 5 million uninsured children, paid for by tobacco taxes.

But even these efforts are not enough to fully protect our children from the dangers of smoking. To do that, we need comprehensive bipartisan legislation. Last September I proposed five key elements that must be at the heart of that legislation. First, and most important, it must

mandate the development of a comprehensive plan to reduce teen smoking with tough penalties for companies that don't comply. Second, it must affirm the FDA's full authority to regulate tobacco products. Third, it must include measures to hold the tobacco industry accountable, especially for marketing tobacco to children. Fourth, it must include concrete measures to improve the public health, from reducing secondhand smoke to expanding smoking cessation programs to funding medical research on the effects of tobacco. And finally, it must protect tobacco farmers and their communities from the loss of income caused by our efforts to reduce smoking by young people.

If Congress sends me a bill that mandates those steps, I will sign it. My administration will do all it can to ensure that Congress passes this legislation. In September I asked the Vice President to build bipartisan support for the legislation, and he has held forums all across our country to focus public attention on the issue.

In a few weeks, my balanced budget proposal will make specific recommendations on how

much the tobacco industry should pay and how we can best use those funds to protect the public health and our children. Today I want to let Members of Congress know that our administration will sit down with them anytime, anywhere to work out bipartisan legislation.

Reducing teen smoking has always been American's bottom line and always our administration's bottom line. But to make it the tobacco industry's bottom line, we have to have legislation. This is not about politics. This is not about money. It is about our children.

The 1998 Congress should be remembered as the Congress that passed comprehensive tobacco legislation, not the Congress that passed up this historic opportunity to protect our children and our future.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:50 a.m. on January 16 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 17.

Statement on the Decision of Representative Louis Stokes Not To Seek Reelection

January 18, 1998

Throughout his illustrious career in the United States Congress, Representative Louis Stokes has been a champion of America's finest values. He has worked tirelessly to better the lives of our children and our veterans and has stood steadfast in an effort to bring our country together amid all of our diversity to build a stronger community.

Representative Stokes has been a true advocate for the people of Cleveland and for all Americans who support giving people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives. He has served our country from the bottom of his heart, and his retirement after three decades of dedicated service will be a loss felt by all.

Exchange With Reporters at Cardozo High School

January 19, 1998

Paula Jones Civil Lawsuit

Q. Mr. President, according to Ambassador Seitz, the British believe that Jean Kennedy Smith passed along intelligence information to the IRA. Does that concern you, sir?

On another subject—[laughter]—sir, I didn't hear, I'm sorry, I'm getting hard of hearing. Well, on another subject, after Saturday are you persuaded you may prevail if the Jones case actually does go to trial?