

protected our children from what is still the number one public health problem in America today.

Now, that is what is happening. This stuff matters. And, oh, by the way, in the way of tax cuts, we had a targeted tax cut program, and it covered child care, as Ed Rendell said. It helped small businesses take out pension plans for their employees. And it was all paid for.

And on health care, we did have a provision so that 55- to 65-year-old people could buy into health care plans, because a huge number of them are forced into early retirement or their spouses go on Medicare, but they can't, so they lose their employer-based coverage, don't have any health insurance. And it doesn't cost much money. No action.

So I say to you, what is really at stake here is about whether this election is about Washington or about you; whether it's about power and politics or people; whether it's about partisanship or progress.

And when you leave here tonight, I want you to really think—go home and just talk. If you've got couples here tonight, talk among yourselves. What do you think the really big challenges facing this country are going to be in the next 25 or 30 years? What do you think the things are that we could do right now that would address them most? And if you believe we ought to save Social Security before we squander the first surplus we've had in a generation, if you believe we should pass this health care bill of rights, if you believe that we should put education first among our investment priorities, if you think—we ought to do what is necessary to keep America strong economically and in the leadership of the world economy and fighting for peace and freedom.

Our strength, economically, enables us to be a force for peace in Northern Ireland; enables

us to continue to hold out hope of peace and work for it in the Middle East; enables us to do what we're trying to do now to avert a horrible incidence of the death of innocents in Kosovo this winter; enables us to try to work with other countries to bring down the threat of terrorism and nuclear weapons and chemical and biological weapons. It all rests on America's sense of strength and purpose.

Now, if you believe that we ought to be for those things, and if you believe this election ought to be about you and your children and your grandchildren and the other people that live in Philadelphia, then I would challenge you not to leave your citizenship responsibilities with the signing of the check that you wrote to get here tonight, because the direction of these issues will be determined not only by how people vote but whether they vote.

And so I say in closing, adversity is not our enemy—complacency is. This is the greatest country in history. For 220 years, against all the odds, no matter what happens, we always somehow figure out how to do the right thing to get a little closer to our ideals of a more perfect Union, of freedom and opportunity for everybody. And we can do it this time. But we need your voice. We need your efforts. We need you to talk like I'm talking to you, to everybody you see between now and November.

So when you go home tonight and you ask yourself, "Why did I go there?" I hope your answer will be, "Because I wanted to know exactly what I should do as a citizen in the next 5 weeks to do right by my country in the 21st century."

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. in Room 202 at Philadelphia City Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Edward Rendell of Philadelphia and State Senator Vincent Fumo.

The President's Radio Address

October 3, 1998

Good morning. This week I announced that we've closed the book on nearly three decades of deficits. Today I want to talk about another challenge we must face to keep our economy

and our Nation growing strong: protecting America's farmers and ranchers.

For nearly 6 years now, strengthening our economy has been my top priority as President.

Today, because of the hard work of the American people, these are good times for our country, with nearly 17 million new jobs, wages rising, the lowest unemployment in nearly 30 years, the lowest inflation in more than 30 years. But for the farmers and ranchers whose hard work has helped to build our new prosperity, times are not as good. In fact, America's farms are facing the worst crisis in more than a decade.

This year, flood and drought and crop disease have wiped out entire harvests. Plummeting prices here at home and collapsing markets in Asia have threatened the livelihood of entire communities. Many farmers will see their net income this year drop by as much as 40 percent below a 5-year average. Farm failures have become so common that in some parts of our country trained farm auctioneers have been brought out of retirement. Families who have farmed the same land for generations are giving up and moving to town.

We've already taken steps to help farmers and ranchers weather the crisis. In August I signed new legislation to speed up farm program payments. Next week we'll purchase another allotment of the \$250 million of wheat we pledged to buy to feed hungry people around the world and help our farmers here at home. And I've directed Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman to do everything within his authority to help farmers who have suffered significant losses and to give them the resources they need now to plan next spring's crops. But with crop and livestock prices still dropping, with foreign markets still in danger of collapse, with family farms still in jeopardy, we know we must do more.

As we near the end of the legislative session and finish our work on the budget, we have a real opportunity to protect our farmers. The strict budget rules permit special measures for one-time emergencies. And make no mistake, for America's farm families this is a real emergency, as harmful as a hurricane, a flood, or a riot.

So this summer, I sent a proposal to Congress for emergency aid for our farmers, and I backed a proposal by Senators Harkin and Daschle to lift the cap on marketing loan rates for one year. Since then, we've strengthened our proposal to help hundreds of thousands of farmers while honoring the budget rules.

Congress is now considering a package which, though it adopts many of the protections we've proposed, still does not do enough for farmers who are suffering from the lowest prices in decades. I call on Congress not to leave town before they've sent me a comprehensive plan that protects farmers by strengthening the safety net at this very difficult time.

With Congress in town for just a few more days, we must take another critical step to help our farmers and ranchers who rely on exports to make a living and support their families. Farm products from one of every three acres planted in America are sold abroad. And when those markets stumble, our farmers take a fall, too.

Just this week the New York Times ran a story that described the tons of wheat, apples, and other farm goods piling up on our docks because Asian customers can no longer afford them. That is why we must give the International Monetary Fund the resources it needs to help our customers in Asia so that they can continue to buy our farm products.

Congress has had months and months to create a stronger IMF, better able to deal with the most serious financial challenge the world has faced in 50 years. Now, each day Congress delays on IMF, our farmers, our ranchers, our economy, our future suffer.

It's way past time for Congress to act on the IMF and do the right thing for our farmers. Our farming families are the lifeblood of our land or, as President Franklin Roosevelt once called them, "the source from which the reservoirs of our Nation's strength are constantly renewed."

We cannot afford to let them fail. And with these steps, we will strengthen and support our farms and our farm families, just as they have sustained us throughout our history.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:51 p.m. on October 2 at the Wyndham Hotel in Philadelphia, PA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 2 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.