

## The President's Radio Address *April 10, 1999*

Good morning. Today I want to talk to you about our continuing efforts to break the cycle of dependency and make responsibility and work a way of life for all Americans.

Work is more than just a weekly paycheck. It is, at heart, our way of life. Work lends purpose and dignity to our lives, instills in our children the basic values that built our Nation. But for too long, too many Americans were trapped in a broken welfare system that exiled generation after generation from the mainstream of American life by cutting them off from the world of work.

I took office determined to change that, from giving States the flexibility they needed to make welfare a second chance, not a way of life, to passing the historic bipartisan welfare reform bill that ended welfare as we knew it, to launching the Welfare to Work partnership to create private sector jobs for welfare recipients. We have made remarkable progress.

Today I am pleased to announce that since 1993, we cut the welfare rolls nearly in half by a record 6½ million people. Thanks to our strong economy and strong leadership in the States and the private sector, the number of Americans who are beginning to replace welfare checks with paychecks has tripled since 1992. I'm proud to announce that we in the National Government are doing our part to help, surpassing the goal we set for ourselves by hiring almost 12,000 welfare recipients in just 2 years.

You can see the evidence of our progress in communities across our country, in hard-pressed neighborhoods where bus drivers who used to pass by empty stations now report their buses are filled with people on their way to work. You can see it on inner-city streets where new storefront tax preparing businesses are helping people file their income tax returns, some for the very first time in their lives. April 15th may not be the most favorite day for Americans, but for these people it's a cause for celebration.

Reforming our broken welfare system was the right thing to do. Now we must finish the job. Today I am pleased to unveil the final rules that will carry out the welfare reform bill I signed into law in 1996. This major new regula-

tion does two important things. First, it enforces strict State work requirements and holds States accountable for moving people from the welfare rolls to the workplace. Second, the new regulation makes it easier for States to use their welfare block grant to pay for child care, for transportation, for job retention services, to help people who have left welfare stay off the rolls and help families from going on welfare in the first place.

This regulation says loud and clear: People ought to get paychecks, not welfare checks. But to finish the job on welfare reform, we must press on in our efforts to restore responsibility and make work a way of life again for all Americans. Now, in this time of great prosperity, with our economy booming and our confidence high, we can't afford to leave anyone behind.

One of the biggest obstacles facing all working families is finding child care they can afford and trust. I'm pleased that the Senate recently approved, with bipartisan support, significant new funding to help low income families pay for child care. I hope Congress takes this critical step to give America's working families the support they need to thrive. Frankly, I hope they will also pass the rest of my child care proposal to give tax credits and other support to working families. That will help more people move from welfare to work and stay off welfare.

Finally, we can't finish the job of welfare reform without doing more to help people who have the hardest time moving from welfare to work, those who live in the poorest neighborhoods and have the poorest job skills. That's why I call on Congress to pass my plan to extend the Labor Department's Welfare to Work program and to fully fund my proposal to provide transportation grants and housing vouchers that will help more Americans leave welfare behind by getting from where they are to where the jobs are.

With these steps, we can make the legacy of welfare dependency a memory of the 20th century and build a community of work and responsibility in the 21st century.

Thank for listening.

*Apr. 10 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999*

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:50 p.m. on April 9 in the administrative offices of Memorial Hall in Philadelphia, PA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 10. The transcript was made

available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 9 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

## Joint Statement by President Bill Clinton and Premier Zhu Rongji *April 10, 1999*

On the occasion of the signing of the Agreement on U.S. China Agricultural Cooperation, President Bill Clinton and Premier Zhu Rongji reaffirmed that the United States and the People's Republic of China have advanced substantially their common goal of China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). This Agreement and the significant consensus achieved on a broad range of market access and Protocol issues have further advanced that goal. President Clinton and Premier Zhu wel-

come this significant progress. The United States strongly supports the accession of the People's Republic of China to the WTO in 1999. Therefore, President Clinton and Premier Zhu instruct their trade ministers to continue bilateral negotiations in order to satisfactorily resolve the important remaining issues and reach agreement on strong commercial terms as soon as possible.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

## Statement on the Observance of Orthodox Easter *April 11, 1999*

I wish to send a warm message of greetings today to the 6 million Orthodox Christian Americans and the quarter-billion Orthodox Christians around the world, as they gather to proclaim that "Christ has risen."

I know the feeling of joy that comes on Easter Sunday, when we celebrate the miracle of Jesus' Resurrection and His gift to us of eternal life. Yet I also understand that on this particular Easter Sunday, the joy Orthodox Christians feel may be mixed with other emotions: with sadness over the tragic events in and around Kosovo, and with fear for those whose lives may still

be in danger. The majority of those forced from Kosovo in the last 2 weeks are Muslim, but among them are Catholics and Orthodox Christians, too. Our hearts and prayers must go out to all who have suffered. We hope and pray for the restoration of peace and a resolution based on democracy and tolerance.

On this holiest of days, when Orthodox Christians celebrate the triumph of life over death, of hope over despair, let us recommit to seeking peace, human rights, and an end to suffering for people around the world.

## Remarks to the Community at Barksdale Air Force Base in Bossier City, Louisiana *April 12, 1999*

Thank you very much. Let me begin by thanking Secretary Cohen and General Shelton for their truly outstanding leadership on behalf

of our Nation's military. They are eloquent and profound representatives of what is best about this country, and I thank them.