

still keep the enduring gift of your devotion and love.

As you journey into the new millennium, I wish you success and fulfillment at work and with your children.

Congratulations, good luck, and God bless you.

[At this point, Dr. Steve A. Favors, president, Grambling State University, jokingly offered the President a faculty position.]

The President. Let me say—I must say, when I was invited to come back and teach and I was told all about the food and all the perks of the job and then the president said he wasn't serious, I was getting into this. [Laughter] I've got a good pension; I can work pretty cheap. [Laughter]

Let me say one thing seriously—I very much hate that I have to go back now but I have—as you know, we have got a lot going on overseas, and it's 6 hours ahead there, and I have to make a lot of phone calls today and do a lot of work. Otherwise I wouldn't leave. I would like to stay here until midnight—not talk until

midnight, just stay here until midnight. [Laughter]

This has been a wonderful thing for me. I have had a lot more fun than you have so far at this. I cannot thank you. I'm so proud of you. And I like looking out there and seeing your faces and your eyes and your self-confidence. And I want you to go out and do a great job with your lives.

Thank you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:47 a.m. in Eddie Robinson Stadium, after receiving an honorary doctor of laws degree. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. E. Edward Jones of the National Baptist Convention of America, who gave the invocation; Mayor John Williams of Grambling; Bobby J. Jindal, president, University of Louisiana System; and Eddie Robinson, former head football coach, and former NFL Washington Redskins quarterback Doug Williams, current head football coach, Grambling State University. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Memorandum on New Tools To Help Parents Balance Work and Family May 24, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: New Tools to Help Parents Balance Work and Family

Since I became President, my Administration has worked hard to make sure that parents have the tools they need to meet their obligations at home and at work. I am proud that the very first bill I signed into law was the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Since 1993, the FMLA has allowed millions of Americans to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave—without fear of losing their jobs—to care for a newborn or adopted child, to attend to their own serious health needs, or to care for a seriously ill parent, son, daughter, or spouse. Too many American workers, however, have been unable to take the leave they need because they simply cannot afford to go without a paycheck.

Therefore, I am taking new steps toward enabling workers to take the leave they need.

First, I hereby direct the Secretary of Labor to propose regulations that enable States to develop innovative ways of using the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system to support parents on leave following the birth or adoption of a child. In addition, I direct the Secretary to develop model State legislation that States could use in following these regulations. In this effort, the Department of Labor is to evaluate the effectiveness of using the UI system for these or related purposes. In a 1996 study conducted by the Commission on Family and Medical Leave, lost pay was the most significant barrier to parents taking advantage of unpaid leave after the birth or adoption of a child. This new step will help to give States the ability to eliminate a significant barrier that parents face in taking leave.

Second, I direct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to propose government-wide regulations to allow Federal employees to use up to 12 weeks of accrued sick leave

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each year to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a “serious health condition,” as that term is defined for the purpose of applying the FMLA. Currently, the amount of sick leave that can be used to care for a family member who is ill is limited to 13 days each year for most Federal employees. By enabling Federal workers to use the sick leave they have earned, we will eliminate a significant barrier to caring for a family member with a serious health condition. The use of paid sick leave under this policy will be subject to the same conditions as the use of unpaid leave for these purposes under the FMLA. In particular, the same notification and certification requirements that govern the use of unpaid leave to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent under the FMLA will apply to Federal employees who use paid sick leave for this purpose. I believe the Federal Government has an important role to play in setting an example for the Nation.

Finally, I direct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to establish an Inter-agency Family Friendly Workplace Working Group within 90 days to promote, evaluate, and exchange information on Federal family-friendly workplace initiatives. I also direct the head of each executive department and agency to appoint a family-friendly work/life coordinator to serve as a member of this Working Group. Working Group representatives will be responsible for making sure that Federal employees are aware of the full range of options available to them to meet their personal and family responsibilities (such as alternative work schedules, telecommuting, part-time employment, and job sharing). The coordinators also will provide employees with information about child and elder care resources currently available in their communities, and establish and promote parent support groups, elder care support groups, and on-site nursing mothers’ programs.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Message to the Senate on Ratification of the Amended Mines Protocol of the Convention on Conventional Weapons

May 24, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

I am gratified that the United States Senate has given its advice and consent to the ratification of the Amended Mines Protocol of the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

The Senate and my Administration, working together, reached agreement on a detailed resolution of advice and consent to ratification, including 13 conditions covering issues of significant interest and concern. I will implement these provisions. I will, of course, do so without prejudice to my Constitutional authorities. A condition in a resolution of advice and consent to ratification cannot alter the allocation of authority and responsibility under the Constitution, for both the Congress and the President.

I am grateful to Majority Leader Lott, Minority Leader Daschle, and Senators Helms, Biden, Leahy, and the many others who have assisted in this ratification effort. It is clear that the practical result of our work together on the Protocol will well serve the critical humanitarian interest of protecting civilians from the dangers posed to them by landmines, as well as the imperative requirements of ensuring the safety and effectiveness of U.S. military forces. In this spirit, I express my hope that the Protocol will lead to further sound advances in the development of the international law of armed conflict.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 24, 1999.