

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. in the Santa Monica Room at the Westin Century Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Becerra's wife, Carolina Reyes; Fermin Cuza, senior vice president of international trade, Mattel, Inc.; Tom Umberg, former Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy; Los Angeles

councilmen Nick Pacheco and Michael Feuer; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush of Texas and Vice Presidential candidate Dick Cheney. Representative Becerra was a candidate for reelection in California's 30th Congressional District.

The President's Radio Address

August 12, 2000

Good morning. These are good times for America, with the strongest economy we've ever had. And all across our country, Americans of every age and background are working together to strengthen the fabric of our communities.

Today I want to talk about some remarkable progress our society has made in the last 8 years: Crime is at a 25-year low; the welfare rolls, the smallest in 30 years; and a new report from the Centers for Disease Control shows that teen birth rates have fallen for the eighth year in a row, and now we have the lowest teen birth rate in 60 years. This is a remarkable achievement.

Consider this. If the teen birth rate had stayed at the same as its peak in 1991, teen mothers would have given birth to another 120,000 babies this year. That drop is wonderful news and further proof that together we can make real progress on social problems people once said were beyond our reach. This is a tribute to community and religious groups, to teachers and families, and of course, to our teenagers themselves.

From the start of our administration, we've endeavored to restore the sense that responsibility and opportunity are the foundations of a strong American community. Five years ago we called upon parents and community leaders to launch a national campaign to prevent teen pregnancy. The next year we worked across party lines to enact landmark welfare reform, which requires unmarried minor parents to stay in school and live under adult supervision. We also demanded that fathers live up to their obligations and have doubled child support collections. We've increased counseling, promoted abstinence, and paired children with mentors, doc-

umenting our achievements in a report to Congress this week.

Despite this progress, we know that too many of America's children still are having children. As friends and neighbors, we need to reach out and help these young people learn and grow.

Today I'm taking action to promote one innovative approach we all know will work. It's called, second chance homes, an idea that Vice President Gore and I have long supported and which was championed early on by Senators Moynihan, Kent Conrad, and Joe Lieberman.

These homes provide teenage moms and their babies with an environment that is safe, supportive, and supervised. The teens get the help they need to finish school. They learn how to care for their children and manage a budget. Some homes also work with teen fathers.

Experts say mothers in these homes are less likely to have another baby or go on welfare and more likely to get an education and find a job. I read of one young Massachusetts woman who got pregnant at 14 and soon was estranged from her family with no place to live. With the help of a second-chance home, she got back on her feet, trained at a community college, and has left welfare to become a proud working mother.

Second-chance homes are a good idea that enjoy bipartisan support. I've asked Congress already to provide \$25 million to start more of them across the country. Now let's take bipartisan action to give mothers and babies hope for a better future.

But many families shouldn't have to wait for Congress to act. That's why today I'm directing the Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Housing and Urban Development to work together to help more communities across America open second-chance homes.

First, we'll make it easier for communities and faith-based groups to acquire vacant or foreclosed property to create these homes for teen mothers.

Second, we'll provide communities a blueprint for how to create second-chance homes, and a roadmap of Federal and State resources they can tap to get one up and running.

We extend this helping hand to these families because it's the right thing to do and because, over time, it will help the teen birth rate go down even more. With these steps, we'll do still more to make welfare what it was meant

to be, a second chance, not a way of life. Working together in a spirit of progress and respect, we can help everyone to make the most of their own lives.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:22 p.m. on August 11 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 12. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 11 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Memorandum on Second Chance Homes for Teen Parents

August 11, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

Subject: Second Chance Homes for Teen Parents

My Administration has made it a key priority to promote personal responsibility, prevent teenage pregnancy, and to provide young people with the educational and employment opportunities necessary to break the cycle of dependency. We know the devastating effects on young people when they become parents too soon—nearly 80 percent of single teen mothers end up on welfare and only one-third receive a high school diploma or GED. We also know the impact that this has on their children, who are 40 percent more likely to have low birth weights; need 20 percent more health care; and are at greater risk of abuse and neglect. Moreover, girls of teen mothers are a third more likely to become teen mothers themselves and boys of teen mothers are nearly 3 times more likely to be incarcerated than boys of mothers who delayed childbearing.

Under my Administration, I have taken bold steps to promote responsibility and prevent teen pregnancy by taking executive action to require young mothers to stay in school or risk losing welfare payments, enacting welfare reform in 1996, strengthening child support enforcement, and launching a National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. We know that these efforts are having an impact: teen birth rates have

dropped for the eighth year in a row, falling by 20 percent since their most recent peak in 1991 to the lowest levels since we began collecting these data 60 years ago. But we also know that there are still far too many children having children, and we must do more.

To build on this progress and to reach out to teen mothers at risk of a repeat pregnancy, my FY 2001 budget includes a provision to invest \$25 million in the creation and expansion of "second chance homes." It is critical that we help teen parents who cannot live with their own parents or other relatives gain access to supportive, adult-supervised living arrangements—second chance homes—that offer parenting skills, job counseling, education, and other referrals to help reduce the chance of repeat pregnancies and improve the prospects for young mothers and their children. Where appropriate, these programs should also reach out to involve young fathers in responsible parenting, and to help reconnect these teens with their own parents. An early evaluation of the Second Chance Homes program in Massachusetts has demonstrated that second chance homes can reduce the number of repeat pregnancies. Moreover, this study showed that mothers served by second chance homes were more likely to become self-sufficient, complete high school, and to keep their children's immunizations up to date. With approximately 100,000 repeat pregnancies each year, we must do all