

to 15 years will have more people in their sixties than in their thirties in those countries because of the AIDS epidemic. Their economies, their societies are very likely to become largely dysfunctional, along with their political systems, unless we can do something to turn the AIDS epidemic.

I think we can keep more edge on the fight against AIDS at home if we marry it more closely to the fight against AIDS around the world.

Mr. Bull. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. I enjoyed the visit.

Mr. Bull. I appreciate it very much.

The President. Thanks.

NOTE: The interview began at 12:47 p.m. aboard Air Force One en route from Andrews Air Force Base, MD, to Dallas, TX, and the transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 23. In his remarks, the President referred to Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; Dennis and Judy Shepard, parents of murder victim Matthew Shepard; Commander David O'Malley, Laramie, WY, Police Department, who investigated Shepard's murder; gay activist and author David Mixner; and Marty Rouse, assistant to the Secretary of Health and Human Services. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks on the Establishment of a National Drunk Driving Standard

October 23, 2000

Good morning. I really believe that everything that needs to be said about this has just been said. I want to thank Millie Webb for sharing her story and for her crusading leadership. I want to thank another person who is here today, Brenda Frazier, who came to the White House in 1998 to talk about the tragic death of her 9-year-old daughter, Ashley, by a drunk driver.

And I want to thank all the members of Mothers Against Drunk Driving for the grassroots campaign that has galvanized our Nation and changed the way we think and now, thank goodness, the way policymakers behave when it comes to this issue.

I thank you, Secretary Slater. And I thank all the Members of Congress who have worked on this. We did have strong bipartisan support. It finally was able to overcome the lobbying pressure that Millie described.

But I want to say a special word of appreciation to Representative Nita Lowey from New York, who is here to my right, and to Senator Frank Lautenberg. They have worked for more than 5 years on this legislation, and we wouldn't be here today without their leadership.

And let me say a special word of good wishes to Senator Lautenberg. He is retiring after 18 years in the Senate. And he is leaving a true legacy as a champion for the children, the families, and the economy of this Nation, and we wish him well. Thank you, Frank.

I'd also like to thank the other members of the administration who are here, who worked on this legislation, including Admiral Loy, the Commander of the Coast Guard, and others from the Department of Transportation and the Department of Defense. And I'd like to welcome the mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley, here and congratulate him on the things that Chicago has in this transportation bill—[laughter]—once again showing that his influence reaches beyond the city limits of the Windy City.

Let me say to all of you that, for me, this is a very good day for the United States. This .08 standard is the biggest step to toughen drunk driving laws and reduce alcohol related crashes since a national minimum drinking age was established a generation ago. It is estimated by the experts that have studied it that it will save at least 500 lives every year. How often do we get a chance to begin a good morning and a good week by saving 500 lives a year?

I appreciate what Millie said, that we sounded the call here at the White House for a .08 standard in all 50 States over 2½ years ago. It has been an uphill battle. But the victory came because there were Members of Congress in both parties who worked with a collation of health and safety organizations to do the right thing. It came because young people, parents, and communities recognized the problem and

decided to do something about it. But mostly, let's face it, it came because people like Millie Webb and Brenda Frazier and their families decided to take their grief and make something good happen for the rest of America. No point in our kidding ourselves, the rest of us would have never defeated the lobbying interests that were against this legislation if it hadn't been for the people who were willing to honor their loved ones by standing up and being counted and fighting until this day came to pass.

We have been working for years now to increase awareness, strengthen laws, toughen enforcement. Five years ago I signed a zero-tolerance law for underage drinking and driving. *[Applause]* I'm glad you like that. You know, the surveys always tell you, if you talk about something that happened more than a year ago, it has a limited public response. *[Laughter]* And I always pointed out, it may be limited, but it's enthusiastic. *[Laughter]*

Two years ago I took executive action to make .08 the limit on Federal property, and we launched a public education campaign on drunk driving. This year the Departments of Transportation and Justice have released about \$60 million to help communities combat drunk driving and underage drinking and to increase seatbelt use.

And Secretary Slater, I just want to say at this moment how much I appreciate what you have done. You know, this man and I have worked together for 18 years now. I've aged quite a lot, and he looks just about like he did 18 years ago. *[Laughter]* He was a very young man when he came to work for me, and I have seen him grow and mature. And I think you'd be hard-pressed to name another person who served as Secretary of Transportation with greater distinction and who has not only tried to get more money for roads and bridges, more money for airports, more money for rail and mass transit—and we're still working on high-speed rail—but he's also tried to humanize the face of transportation and save lives. And I am very grateful to him, as well.

Thanks to all these folks' efforts, we are making progress. Last year people killed in alcohol-related crashes dropped to an all-time low. But that low figure was a shocking 15,700 people, including more than 2,200 children. Now, I think we all know that as many people as we have driving our Nation's highways and all the countless miles that are driven, there will never

be a year when no one will lose their life on the highway because of a mechanical failure or because an exhausted driver trying to reach a family emergency falls asleep or because something else happens. But if you could just take away the alcohol-related deaths, the number would drop to a breathtaking low.

Alcohol is still the single greatest factor in motor vehicle deaths and injuries. This law, .08, is simply a commonsense way to help stop that. The science has been clear for a long time. People that have that much alcohol in their blood are too impaired to drive safely. Judgment, reaction times, and other critical driving skills are severely diminished. When a driver with a .08 blood level turns the ignition, that driver is turning a car into a lethal weapon.

The law is effective. The National Transportation Safety Administration study found that Illinois, after adopting the .08 standard, reduced the number of drinking drivers involved in fatal crashes by about 14 percent. The law is reasonable. It is not, contrary to what some of the propaganda against this said, about just having a drink or two after dinner. There is more involved here. Lowering the limit will make responsible Americans take even greater care when they drink alcohol in any amounts, if they intend to drive, and it should, in any amounts.

Today's success is just one more example of what we do when we come together to meet common challenges, to help our children's future and make our communities stronger. We have to keep working together, because there are still too many drunk drivers, and there will still be too many after this law passes.

So I urge the American people to take notice of this day and, mostly, to take notice of the stories of the Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Talk with your friends, your co-workers, your neighbors, your family members. Make sure there is a designated driver, and teach children about the dangers of drunk driving.

This .08 measure, as I said, is part of a larger transportation bill that I signed that will also improve roads and bridges and airports and mass transit. It will also enhance the safety and performance of the transportation system itself in the new century. But I can't let this day go without saying that we're now in the fourth week of November and the work of the budget was supposed to be completed on October the 30th. I mean, we're in the fourth week of October. The work of the budget is supposed to

be completed September 30th. [Laughter] I'm still not over flying to Egypt and back in 3 days. I'm sorry.

But anyway, you get the point. We're 3 weeks late, and we don't have a budget. Last week I signed another continuing resolution to keep the Government open until Wednesday, but I told the leadership that if we don't make this deadline, we're going to have to go forward on a day-by-day basis because Congress expects us to get the job done.

I must say, this is the most unusual thing I've ever seen. I would have thought that Congress would want to get the job done so they could go home and run for reelection. And I say that not in a negative way. I think that's an honorable part of our system. We need to finish our business here. We need especially to get an education budget that is worthy of our children, that builds on what works, continues to hire 100,000 teachers, helps communities build or modernize schools, expands the after-school programs and college opportunities, and helps to put a qualified, certified teacher in every classroom.

This is Monday morning, and the children are at school. The parents are at work, and Congress comes back tonight to go to work. Today we have celebrated the best of the American political system. Citizens came together, told their stories, overcame obstacles, and after years of fighting, made America a safer, more humane, more decent place. This proves that our system can work. And what we need to do is to bring these values and this kind of effort to the remaining few days of Congress, so that we can together do more things that are worthy of the great people we serve and the great system we're privileged to be a part of.

Thank you very much, and good morning.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Millie Webb, national president, Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Prior to his remarks, the President signed H.R. 4475, the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001, in the Oval Office. H.R. 4475, approved October 23, was assigned Public Law No. 106-346.

Statement on Signing the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 *October 23, 2000*

I am pleased to sign into law today H.R. 4475, the "Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001." The Act provides over \$58 billion in funding for the Nation's vital transportation safety and infrastructure investment needs. The transportation safety improvements contained in this legislation will save lives on our highways and other transportation systems, and the record level of infrastructure investment will help improve the conditions and performance of the Nation's transportation system in support of a strong economy.

The legislation provides critical transportation safety funding and also contains related legislative provisions. Of particular importance is a provision that will help set a national impaired driving standard at 0.08 Blood Alcohol Content and thus reduce drunk driving on our Nation's

roads. As I have previously said, this is a reasonable, commonsense standard that could save 500 lives a year, while still permitting adults to drink responsibly and moderately. I wish to commend Senators Lautenberg and Shelby, Congressman Wolf, and Congresswoman Lowey for their bipartisan efforts in seeking inclusion of this provision. The legislation also includes a compromise measure that will enable the Department of Transportation to proceed with all stages of rule-making, short of a final rule, on "hours of service" concerning the amount of time drivers of large interstate trucks and buses can spend behind the wheel. It also permits the Department to move forward with its proposal for rollover ratings on cars and light trucks while the National Academy of Sciences studies this issue. In addition, the legislation contains funding increases requested by my Administration for