

creating jobs for American workers, jobs so that men and women can put food on the table.

That's the question these two leaders ask all the time, "How best can I help the members of my union find work? What can I do to make them, you know, be able to feed their families?" It's the same question I ask. And that's why we're linked up on this issue. We've got Republicans sitting around this table; we've got Democrats sitting around this table; we've probably got some people who don't care about politics sitting around the table. But all of us know that the energy bill that's now stuck in the Senate, that can't get voted on in the Senate, will be good for America. It will be good for our foreign policy, good for our national security, and more importantly, it will be good for jobs.

And so I want to thank you, Jimmy, for your leadership. And Doug, thank you very

much. I appreciate you all working with us. I appreciate members of my Cabinet for coming. Together, we can show the country that when we work together, we can do what's right—do what's right for the working folks.

And so I'm honored you would let me come by. It's a privilege to be around this table. There's no telling what kind of conversations have gone on around this table. [Laughter] But it is a huge honor. Thank you, sir. Doug, thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:11 p.m. in the boardroom at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters headquarters building. In his remarks, he referred to James P. Hoffa, general president, International Brotherhood of Teamsters; and Douglas J. McCarron, general president, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners.

Remarks on Signing the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001

January 17, 2002

Thank you all. Please be seated. Well, thanks, Laura. I appreciate those kind words, and I love you a lot.

I want to welcome you all to the White House. It's our honor to entertain you all and to let you witness a piece of history here. The bill I'm going to sign rests on the belief that our strong Nation is built on strong families. The legislation reaffirms our country's commitment to helping children grow up in secure and loving families by encouraging adoption, by helping young adults make their way in life after they leave foster care, and by expanding mentoring for children who have a mom and dad in prison.

I'm proud of the men and women of Congress who worked hard to make this happen. This is a really good piece of legis-

lation. In this town, sometimes the really good pieces of legislation aren't really recognized, because there hadn't been a lot of fighting and hair-pulling and gnashing of teeth. But this bill, sponsored by both Democrats and Republicans, is a meaningful, real piece of legislation that's going to change people's lives.

I want to thank Mike DeWine, and I want to thank Ben Cardin, and I want to thank Deborah Pryce, three of the bill's sponsors who have come today, for your hard work. I am sorry that Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia and Wally Herger of California are not here, as well. But the five names I just named are responsible for getting this piece of legislation through the House and the Senate and to my desk. And thank you all.

I, too, want to thank Tommy. He's worked really hard. He's a good, compassionate man who cares deeply about our society. And Tommy, thanks for your hard work. You tell your staff, thanks, too, for working.

The family is the foundation of this society. And here's what I know. It's the place where we find deep human fulfillment and where we find love. It is where character of our Nation is shaped and where values are forged. Families provide us with comfort and encouragement, compassion and hope, mutual support and unconditional love. No family is perfect, but every family is important.

Promoting strong families was my firm commitment when I was the Governor of Texas, and promoting strong families remains a priority for me as your President. We all know that children who are surrounded by love have a strong foundation for success as adults. When someone thinks a child is the most important person in the world, that child will grow up to be confident in their self and loving toward others. She'll make her community stronger and her Nation better.

The Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program has a great goal, keeping families together whenever possible. It helps to prevent the removal of children from their homes. And if that must happen to protect a child's safety, it supports efforts to correct the problem that broke the family apart and reunite the family safely and quickly. It also supports adoption and post-adoptive services to place children with loving families, to ease a child's transition into a new family, and to help ensure that families stay strong and intact. My budget next year will build on this good work, by requesting \$505 million in funding for the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program, \$130 million more than it receives this year.

The bill I sign today also supports children who grew up in foster homes by authorizing States to provide vouchers of up to \$5,000 a year for education and voca-

tional training to teens who have aged out of the foster care system. My budget next year will ask Congress for \$60 million to fully fund this program.

I'm especially pleased that this bill authorizes funds for a crucial part of my Armies of Compassion Initiative, mentoring children whose parents are in prison. These children don't see their parents every day but, like all children, need help with homework, someone to play catch with, someone to hug them. Countless adults are willing to open their hearts to these children, and we should do all we can to support their compassion. Government cannot love a child, but it can support those who do, parents and family members and neighbors and caring adults who have heard the call.

We have some parents with us today who have heard the call, who share their love with their children and are building strong families through adoption. Derek and Cindy Baliles are police officers in Montgomery County, Maryland. Thank you all for coming. They knew they had a lot of love to offer, and they knew as soon as they met Taylor and Gerald—better known as G-man—*[laughter]*—that the boys would make great additions to their family. The boys obviously feel the same way. Thanks to their hard work, thanks to the hard work of a county social worker, their adoption was finalized quickly, on the same day as their mother's birthday.

Willie and Sybil Gray originally planned to adopt one little girl who would become a sister to their son, Christopher. But an adoption agency told them that Kenyetta and Katrina, two sisters who needed a new home, needed to be adopted. The girls and their new parents quickly bonded, and Willie and Sybil will finalize their adoption in the next few months.

Adoptive parents like Willie and Sybil and Derek and Cindy give their children the most precious gift possible, their love. Advocates for adoption, many of whom are in this room, know that when you find a loving family, it makes a huge difference

in a child's life, and know that our national goal must be to find a loving family for every child that needs one.

Sadly, a great American and a strong advocate for adoption and stable families passed away this week. Dave Thomas was best known as the founder of Wendy's Restaurants. But people who devote their lives to helping children know that Dave Thomas shared their commitment. As a child who was adopted, Dave once said, "I feel strongly that all children deserve a secure and loving family." His own family provided the foundation that allowed him and encouraged him to become one of America's most successful entrepreneurs and one of America's most familiar faces.

Dave's vision of America was one in which all children would be a part of a

loving family, so they could grow into healthy and happy and successful adults. This bill that I'm fixing to sign will bring us closer to his vision.

And now I'd like the Members of the Congress and Secretary Thompson to join me as I sign the "Promoting Safe and Stable Families" legislation.

[At this point, the President signed the bill.]

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy G. Thompson. H.R. 2873, approved January 17, was assigned Public Law No. 107-133.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With the President's Council on Bioethics January 17, 2002

The President. It's nice to see everybody.

Participant. We're very pleased to be here.

The President. I'm glad you're here. First, let me just say a couple of comments. One, I think—let me thank Leon for taking on the assignment. I appreciate so very much Leon's counsel early on in my administration about how to deal with some very important issues. And then, obviously, I made the decision to put together a council, and I want to thank you all for serving.

I just told NBC News in there that I really think you can help be the conscience of the country, to help us understand some really, really difficult issues that face America and will really face us as we go down the road, and what a vital, vital contribution that you're going to make. It'll help people like me understand what the terms mean and how to come to grips with how medicine and science interface with the dignity of—the issue of life and the dignity of life

and the notion that life is—you know, that there is a Creator.

This is, I think, one of these historic moments for our country, as we come to grips with a new world and how to deal with the new world. And I hope you take this—I know you take this seriously, and I just want to assure you I take it seriously and so does this administration. We all have consciences, and we wrestle with very tough issues. And there's no easy answer to some of the issues. It's hard to look at a parent of a child who's dying and believes if you take life, it will save a life. I mean, these are tough, tough issues to confront.

And I've confronted one already, and there will be others. And I look forward to your advice and counsel, and so does the Nation. It's not just me, it's the country that's going to count on you to really think through what we face.