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Group and Soap Box Trading Co., and Arnold Hiatt, CEO of the Stride-Rite Foundation.

Exchange With Reporters on Health Care Reform

October 21, 1993

Q. Mr. President, why is it taking you so long to draft the health care legislation?

The President. The legislation has been drafted. What we have to do—and let me say we're doing something that no administration, as far as I know, has ever done before. But the reason that we had to delay introducing it is to go back and do two more runs at higher inflation rates, because most people believe that inflation will be a little bit higher because economic growth has come back into the economy.

So we originally ran all the numbers at a 2.7 inflation rate, which was what we were asked to do, what was recommended by the Congressional Budget Office. We now went back, after consulting with our folks, and ran it at a 3.5 percent inflation rate, and then we went back and doublechecked all the numbers with all the actuaries. So unlike a lot of the other bills, we actually have, you will see when the bill comes up, extremely detailed budgetary estimates about which part will cost how much and how it all works.

So essentially, there were no problems in drafting or the policy so much as it was trying to make sure that we had the numbers right. Also, the proposal will increase the reserve fund as a hedge in case, for example, the small business discounts cost more than we thought. We decided to go back to make the Congress and the country feel better about the costs to increase the reserve fund. So just working out the dollars is what has taken all the time, because we wanted to have good numbers ready for them when we came back.

Q. When will it be ready? When will it be ready?

The President. Oh, I think they're going to put it in early next week sometime.

Q. Next week?

The President. Yes.

Q. The 75-cent cigarette tax is final?

The President. That's what will be in the bill.

NOTE: The exchange began at approximately 11:54 a.m. at the Grand Hyatt Washington Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Proclamation 6617—National Consumers Week, 1993

October 21, 1993

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

More than ever, as a Nation and as individual consumers, we need to make every dollar count. Yet, despite the consumer-oriented quality of the U.S. marketplace and the concerted efforts of our law enforcement agencies, marketplace fraud drains at least $100 billion from the economy every year. The loss is not just in dollars, but in consumer confidence—the driving force behind a strong economy.

Fraud has the greatest impact on the most vulnerable consumers. No one, rich or poor, young or old, literate or illiterate, English-speaking or foreign-speaking, able-bodied or disabled, is exempt. What's more, in this electronic global marketplace, fraud has become a ''borderless crime'' that affects consumers around the world.

Since 1982, the President has designated one week of the year to spotlight consumer education as a vital tool in helping consumers make smart shopping decisions. This year, during ''National Consumers Week,'' the focus is on fraud. Consumers can protect their resources and end the costly drain on the economy by knowing how to spot the signs of fraud and where to turn when they suspect fraud.

If you believe that you have been defrauded, the Better Business Bureau, representatives of Federal, State, and local governments, and even the media can help you. Exposing fraud not only helps you, but it can help prevent others from becoming victims in the future.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United