

baum-Kennedy bill which makes health care available to up to 25 million Americans, many of them in lower income jobs where they're more vulnerable. The bill I'm signing today preserves the increases in the earned-income tax credit for working families. It is now clearly better to go to work than to stay on welfare—clearly better. Because of actions taken by the Congress in this session, it is clearly better. And what we have to do now is to make that work a reality.

I've said this many times, but, you know, most American families find that the greatest challenge of their lives is how to do a good job raising their kids and do a good job at work. Trying to balance work and family is the challenge that most Americans in the workplace face. Thankfully, that's the challenge Lillie Harden's had to face for the last 10 years. That's just what we want for everybody. We want at least the chance to strike the right balance for everybody.

Today we are ending welfare as we know it. But I hope this day will be remembered not for what it ended but for what it began: a new day that offers hope, honors responsibility, rewards work, and changes the terms of the debate so that no one in America ever feels again the need to criticize people who are poor on welfare but instead feels the responsibility to reach out to men and women and children who are isolated, who need opportunity, and who are willing to assume responsibility, and give them the opportunity and the terms of responsibility.

Now, I'd like to ask Penelope Howard, Janet Ferrel, Lillie Harden, the Governors, and the Members of Congress from both parties who are here to come up and join me as I sign the welfare reform bill.

Tobacco Regulation

Q. Mr. President, before you sign the bill, could you tell us whether you think it's right to regulate tobacco or nicotine as a drug?

The President. You know, Wolf [Wolf Blitzer, CNN], under the law, I have to wait until the OMB makes a recommendation to me. I think we have to anticipate things. I can't say more than that right now.

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

Reaction to Welfare Reform

Q. Mr. President, some of your core constituencies are furious with you for signing this bill. What do you say to them?

The President. Just what I said up there. We saved medical care. We saved food stamps. We saved child care. We saved the aid to disabled children. We saved the school lunch program. We saved the framework of support. What we did was to tell the State, now you have to create a system to give everyone a chance to go to work who is able-bodied, give everyone a chance to be independent. And we did—that is the right thing to do.

And now welfare is no longer a political football to be kicked around. It's a personal responsibility of every American who ever criticized the welfare system to help the poor people now to move from welfare to work. That's what I say.

This is going to be a good thing for the country. We're going to monitor it, and we're going to fix whatever is wrong with it.

Q. What guarantees are there that these things will be fixed, Mr. President, especially if Republicans remain in control of Congress?

The President. That's what we have elections for.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Governors Tom Carper of Delaware, Roy Romer of Colorado, Zell Miller of Georgia, and Gaston Caperton of West Virginia; and former Senator Russell B. Long. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on Signing the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

August 22, 1996

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 3734, the "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996." While far from perfect, this legislation provides an historic opportunity to end welfare as we know it and transform our broken welfare

system by promoting the fundamental values of work, responsibility, and family.

This Act honors my basic principles of real welfare reform. It requires work of welfare recipients, limits the time they can stay on welfare, and provides child care and health care to help them make the move from welfare to work. It demands personal responsibility, and puts in place tough child support enforcement measures. It promotes family and protects children.

This bipartisan legislation is significantly better than the bills that I vetoed. The Congress has removed many of the worst provisions of the vetoed bills and has included many of the improvements that I sought. I am especially pleased that the Congress has preserved the guarantee of health care for the poor, the elderly, and the disabled.

Most important, this Act is tough on work. Not only does it include firm but fair work requirements, it provides \$4 billion more in child care than the vetoed bills—so that parents can end their dependency on welfare and go to work—and maintains health and safety standards for day care providers. The bill also gives States positive incentives to move people into jobs and holds them accountable for maintaining spending on welfare reform. In addition, it gives States the ability to create subsidized jobs and to provide employers with incentives to hire people off welfare.

The Act also does much more to protect children than the vetoed bills. It cuts spending on childhood disability programs less deeply and does not unwisely change the child protection programs. It maintains the national nutritional safety net, by eliminating the Food Stamp annual spending cap and the Food Stamp and School Lunch block grants that the vetoed bills contained. In addition, it preserves the Federal guarantee of health care for individuals who are currently eligible for Medicaid through the AFDC program or are in transition from welfare to work.

Furthermore, this Act includes the tough personal responsibility and child support enforcement measures that I proposed 2 years ago. It requires minor mothers to live at home and stay in school as a condition of assistance. It cracks down on parents who fail to pay child support by garnishing their

wages, suspending their driver's licenses, tracking them across State lines, and, if necessary, making them work off what they owe.

For these reasons, I am proud to have signed this legislation. The current welfare system is fundamentally broken, and this may be our last best chance to set it straight. I am doing so, however, with strong objections to certain provisions, which I am determined to correct.

First, while the Act preserves the national nutritional safety net, its cuts to the Food Stamp program are too deep. Among other things, the Act reinstates a maximum on the amount that can be deducted for shelter costs when determining a household's eligibility for Food Stamps. This provision will disproportionately affect low-income families with children and high housing costs.

Second, I am deeply disappointed that this legislation would deny Federal assistance to legal immigrants and their children, and give States the option of doing the same. My Administration supports holding sponsors who bring immigrants into this country more responsible for their well-being. Legal immigrants and their children, however, should not be penalized if they become disabled and require medical assistance through no fault of their own. Neither should they be deprived of food stamp assistance without proper procedures or due regard for individual circumstances. Therefore, I will direct the Immigration and Naturalization Service to accelerate its unprecedented progress in removing all bureaucratic obstacles that stand in the way of citizenship for legal immigrants who are eligible. In addition, I will take any possible executive actions to avoid inaccurate or inequitable decisions to cut off food stamp benefits—for example, to a legal immigrant who has performed military service for this country or to one who has applied for and satisfied all the requirements of citizenship, but is awaiting governmental approval of his or her application.

In addition to placing an undue hardship on affected individuals, denial of Federal assistance to legal immigrants will shift costs to States, localities, hospitals, and medical clinics that serve large immigrant populations. Furthermore, States electing to deny these individuals assistance could be faced

with serious constitutional challenges and protracted legal battles.

I have concerns about other provisions of this legislation as well. It fails to provide sufficient contingency funding for States that experience a serious economic downturn, and it fails to provide Food Stamp support to childless adults who want to work, but cannot find a job or are not given the opportunity to participate in a work program. In addition, we must work to ensure that States provide in-kind vouchers to children whose parents reach the 5-year Federal time limit without finding work.

This Act gives States the responsibility that they have sought to reform the welfare system. This is a profound responsibility, and States must face it squarely. We will hold them accountable, insisting that they fulfill their duty to move people from welfare to work and to do right by our most vulnerable citizens, including children and battered women. I challenge each State to take advantage of its new flexibility to use money formerly available for welfare checks to encourage the private sector to provide jobs.

The best antipoverty program is still a job. Combined with the newly increased minimum wage and the Earned Income Tax Credit—which this legislation maintains—H.R. 3734 will make work pay for more Americans.

I am determined to work with the Congress in a bipartisan effort to correct the provisions of this legislation that go too far and have nothing to do with welfare reform. But, on balance, this bill is a real step forward for our country, for our values, and for people on welfare. It should represent not simply the ending of a system that too often hurts those it is supposed to help, but the beginning of a new era in which welfare will become what it was meant to be: a second chance, not a way of life. It is now up to all of us—States and cities, the Federal Government, businesses and ordinary citizens—to work together to make the promise of this new day real.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
August 22, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 3734, approved August 22, was signed Public Law No. 104-193.

Executive Order 13015—White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security

August 22, 1996

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment. There is established the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security (the “Commission”). The Commission shall consist of not more than 25 members, to be appointed by the President from the public and private sectors, each of whom shall have experience or expertise in some aspect of aviation safety or security. The Vice President shall serve as the Chair of the Commission.

Sec. 2. Functions. (a) The Commission shall advise the President on matters involving aviation safety and security, including air traffic control.

(b) The Commission shall develop and recommend to the President a strategy designed to improve aviation safety and security, both domestically and internationally.

(c) The Chair may, from time to time, invite experts to submit information to the Commission; hold hearings on relevant issues; and form committees and teams to assist the Commission in accomplishing its objectives and duties, which may include individuals other than members of the Commission.

Sec. 3. Administration. (a) The heads of executive departments and agencies shall, to the extent permitted by law, provide the Commission such information with respect to aviation safety and security as the Commission requires to fulfill its functions.

(b) The Commission shall be supported, both administratively and financially, by the Department of Transportation and such other sources (including other Federal agencies) as may lawfully contribute to Commission activities.

Sec. 4. General. (a) I have determined that the Commission shall be established in com-