

The progress we're making on teen pregnancy shows that we can overcome even our most stubborn and serious problems. Because of the energy and the effort of the American people, as I said, the crime rate is dropping, the welfare rolls have dropped dramatically, and poverty is down. We can meet our challenges if we'll meet them together, in our homes, our communities, and as a nation. But let me be clear: The teen pregnancy rate is still intolerably high in America. Too many children are still having children. So we must do more.

As I enter my second term, I want to tell you the new and comprehensive steps my administration will take to further reduce the number of out-of-wedlock births:

First, we'll step up support for programs at the local level at work, providing \$7½ million for pioneering programs like the one at Emory University in Atlanta, where young people teach their peers about abstinence and responsibility.

Second, we'll spread the word about these programs so that what works in one community can be tried quickly in more communities.

Third, we'll forge even stronger partnerships with businesses, clergy, and community groups who are committed to dealing with this issue.

And fourth, we'll see to it that we use the most up-to-date research methods to track teen pregnancy trends. We have to make sure our efforts are actually paying off.

Finally, we'll carry out the strong provisions of the welfare reform law I signed last year, which requires teen mothers who receive welfare not only to stay in school but to live at home or in an adult-supervised setting. It sets up second-chance homes where young mothers who can't go home still have a safe place to raise a child and turn their lives around. And it institutes the toughest ever child support measures.

We've made some significant progress in the effort against teen pregnancy in the last few years. With the new steps I'm announcing today, we'll continue our fight against children having children. All of you need to help us send the strongest possible message: It's wrong to be pregnant or father a child

unless you are married and ready to take on the responsibilities of parenthood.

What we're doing to prevent teen pregnancy as a nation is an example of how we can master many of the challenges of our time. The National Government cannot solve all our problems, but it can help by giving individuals, families, and communities the tools they need to take responsibility and solve those problems for themselves.

As President, I'm committed to marshaling all the forces in our society to mobilizing our citizens, our communities, our businesses, our schools to meet our challenges. That is the way we will keep the promise of America alive for all our citizens as we move into the 21st century.

Thanks for listening, and Happy New Year.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Mahogany Run Golf Course in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.

Statement on the Decline in Serious Crime

January 5, 1997

These new FBI statistics show that for the fifth year in a row, serious crime in this country has declined. This is the longest period of decline in over 25 years.

At the beginning of my administration, we set out to change this country's approach to crime by putting more officers on our streets through community policing and taking guns out of the hands of criminals. We are making a difference. Today, our neighborhoods are safer, and we are restoring the American people's confidence that crime can be reduced.

But our work is not done. We must continue to move in the right direction by adding more police officers, cracking down on gangs, and reducing gun and drug violence. That is why I have placed curbing juvenile violence at the top of my anticrime agenda for the new year.

NOTE: This statement was embargoed for release until 5 p.m.

Remarks at the Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast

January 6, 1997

Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President and Tipper and ladies and gentlemen. Hillary and I are delighted to welcome you to the White House. We look forward to these breakfasts. As Al said, we have been doing them on a regular basis now, normally around—just after Labor Day as we sort of rededicate ourselves to the labor of the new year. But this year, we are doing it now for two reasons: one is, obviously, this is on the brink of the inauguration and a new 4-year term for the President and for our country; the other is, we were otherwise occupied last Labor Day. *[Laughter]*

This is a wonderful day to be here. We asked Father Stephanopoulos to pray today because, as all of you know, this is the celebration of Epiphany in the Christian faith, a time of recognizing Christmas in the Orthodox tradition. I also wanted you to pray so that I could say that we were all very impressed with the size of the book contract that—*[laughter]*—that your son got, and we know we can depend upon you to make sure the church gets its 10 percent of that contract. We are very proud of him and very grateful to have him here.

This is the day in the Christian tradition when the wise men came bearing gifts for the baby Jesus. And we have much to be thankful for and much to pray for, but I think what I would say today is that I asked you to come here to share with me your thoughts and to share with you some of ours in the hope that we might all become wiser.

I am very grateful for the progress that our country has made in the last 4 years, grateful that we have been given a chance to play a role in that progress, and mindful that whatever has been done which is good has been done by us together.

One of my college roommates, who I think is a really smart guy, said to me the other day when we were together and joking about our lost youth, he said, “Oh, and one other thing,” as he was leaving, he said, “Don’t ever forget that great Presidents do not do great things. Great Presidents get a lot of other people to do great things. And there is over 250 million of us now, so that’s a lot of great-

ness if you can get us all to do the right thing,” which I thought was an interesting way of saying in part what the magic and genius of democracy is all about.

So we’re thinking a lot now about how we’re going to build our bridge to the 21st century, what we’re going to do in this next term. I’ve listened to all of these experts talk about how hard it is for Presidents to be effective in the second term because, after all, they just got reelected because things went well in their first term, not because they had actually thought through what they were going to do in their second term. But we’ve tried to overcome that disability.

There are a lot of particulars that we could discuss today, but what I’d like for you to think about a little bit, from your perspective and what you can do—two things: what are we going to do; and secondly, and more importantly I think, how are we going to do it? In what spirit shall we proceed?

In any great democracy there are always differences about what are we going to do. There always have been, there always will be, and these are altogether healthy. It would be—America wouldn’t last very long, I think, if 100 percent of the people agreed 100 percent of the time on 100 percent of the issues. What keeps us going—we all know that none of us has perfect and infinite understanding of these complex matters facing our country and facing the world. But we have devised a system—we have nurtured and maintained it now for over 200 years—in which people can reconcile their differences and come to a consensus and an agreement which will push the country forward. So we are enlarged when we come to agreement after honest debate in the right way; we are diminished if, in the way we treat each other, we preclude the possibility of resolution and going forward.

And at times like this, when things are changing so much, we need the right spirit more because we have more to decide, more to deal with. And yet, at times like this, we are in some ways put at risk by the absence of that spirit of reconciliation and respect.

There are several specific things I hope we can talk about later that I think we could reach broad agreement on. For example, some of you think I made a mistake when