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the voluntary ban. I also commend your comments that the Federal Communications Commission has an obligation to consider any and all actions that would protect the public interest in the use of the public airwaves.

I urge the Commission to take all appropriate actions to explore what effects might ensue in light of the decision by manufacturers of hard liquor to abandon their longstanding voluntary ban on television advertising, specifically the impact on underage drinking.

We have made tremendous progress in recent years reducing the incidence of deaths due to drunk driving among our youth. We have taken important steps including the increase in the 1980s in the drinking age to 21 and the passage of zero tolerance legislation for underage drinking and driving. But there is more to be done. Too many of our young people are dying in car crashes, and too many young people are starting to drink at an early age, leading to alcohol and other substance abuse problems.

I would appreciate your help and the help of the Commission in exploring the possible actions you could take to support our parents and children in response to the manufacturers' decision to break with the long and honorable tradition of not advertising on the broadcast medium.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This letter was sent to Reed E. Hundt, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks on April Fool's Day and an Exchange With Reporters

April 1, 1997

The President. I came here today because I thought I should personally deliver some disturbing news. Mike McCurry has just made a fool of himself by taking an unfortunate fall on dimly lit steps here at the White House.

We believe he may have torn a tendon in his upper right thigh, which could get him a 6-inch incision above the place where he's torn it, but we won't know for sure until he's been thoroughly examined. And so until we can bring him back to full health, Kris Engskov is going to do the daily briefing today. [*Laughter*] And he will be my Press Secretary during Mike's absence, and he has some truly disturbing things to comment on. And frankly, I do not have the courage to stand here and listen to what he's about to tell you. But I am responsible for all of it. [*Laughter*]

Q. Will his accent get in the way of his job?

The President. I thought we should have a Press Secretary that did not have an accent for the first time in 4 years. [*Laughter*]

Q. Is there a danger of Mr. McCurry getting his old job back?

The President. I think McCurry's job is in real danger now. [*Laughter*]

Q. Will he be taking narcotics, pain—[*laughter*]——

The President. Yes. And under the 25th amendment he has already signed his authority over to Kris Engskov. [*Laughter*]

Q. How come the pool wasn't notified earlier about this accident?

The President. It's because we're pretty sneaky around here. [*Laughter*]

Q. Was he using alcohol before he fell? [*Laughter*]

The President. And beer and wine. [*Laughter*] But only after he watched 4 hours of advertisements on television. He was shaking beyond all belief.

Q. What about controlling legal authority here?

The President. Well, Kris Engskov is, I'm reliably informed, still underage. [*Laughter*]

I first met this man when he was 3 years old, in his grandfather's store. And he still looks like he's 3 years old to me. [*Laughter*]

Q. Sometimes acts like it.

The President. That's right. Which makes him a perfect choice for the Presidential Press Secretary. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Engskov, this is your big chance. Don't blow it. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Press Assistant Kris Engskov.

Proclamation 6980—Cancer Control Month, 1997

April 1, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In observing Cancer Control Month, we reaffirm our national commitment to fighting this deadly disease. Since the signing of the National Cancer Act in 1971, we as a Nation have made significant strides in combating many forms of cancer. In November 1996, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) announced that the cancer death rate in the United States fell by nearly 3 percent between 1991 and 1995, the first sustained decline since national record-keeping began in the 1930s. The declines in lung, colorectal, and prostate cancer deaths in men, and breast and gynecologic cancer deaths in women, reflect the progress we have made in prevention, early detection, and treatment. However, we recognize how much work must still be done to control and eliminate this disease.

Perhaps one of the most promising achievements of cancer research this past year is in our increased understanding of cancer genetics. We have learned that cancer is a disease of altered genes and altered gene function. Researchers are making great progress in identifying genes whose dysfunction leads to cancer. Our research into the relationship between genetics and cancer also is helping us to better understand the basis for many other diseases and will strengthen our ability to intervene against them. If we are to continue this remarkable progress, we must keep scientific research as a fundamental priority.

Research has already taught us that smoking directly causes lung cancer and markedly increases a person's risk of developing cancers of the pancreas, esophagus, uterus, cervix, mouth, throat, and bladder. We know that many of the deaths from these cancers are preventable. Over the last several years, positive trends have emerged: Business, industry, and all levels of government have established smoke-free policies, and per-capita cigarette consumption has declined by 37 percent over the past two decades.

Reasons for deep concern remain, however. More than 3,000 teenagers become regular smokers each day in the United States. We must do all we can to help our children understand the consequences of smoking, and we must set a good example ourselves by not smoking. Last year, in an important step forward, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) proposed restrictions on the advertising, marketing, and sales of cigarettes to minors. In February of this year, I was proud to announce that the first part of those rules went into effect.

We are also learning more about the relationship between diet and cancer risk, and we are gaining insight into the role of dietary supplements in reducing certain types of cancer. We know that by improving our diet—reducing fat and increasing the amount of fiber—we reduce our risk of cancer. The NCI, in collaboration with the food industry, sponsors the national 5-A-Day Program, which encourages Americans to eat five servings of fruit and vegetables each day.

We are taking other important steps, as well. Federal agencies are working together to ensure that potentially active drugs move quickly from discovery to clinical use. To reduce the number of cancer deaths and new cases, and to help cancer patients survive longer and live better lives, several Federal agencies are working with State and local health departments to develop and implement national plans for breast and cervical cancer screening and to promote cancer prevention. I was pleased to announce last week that my Administration is launching a major public education campaign to make sure that every woman and every health care professional in America is aware of the NCI's new recommendations that women between the ages of 40 and 49 should get a mammography examination for breast cancer every one or two years. The Medicare budget that I just submitted to the Congress will cover the expense of these annual exams, and we are urging State Medicaid directors to cover annual mammograms as well, with the assurance that the Federal Government will pay its matching share if they do so.