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And the women businessowners of America can have a huge impact in doing something that, by the way, will also help the economy if you create that many more consumers, bring that many more people into the work force, have that many more people being productive, that many more people being a positive role model for their own children. This is a huge thing. So I hope that you will, all of you, do what you can to try to mobilize the women business people of America to try to take an active and aggressive role in this effort.

I have asked the Congress to pass what I think is a good flextime bill to give people more options to take their overtime in time or money. But I think the important thing is that the employee ought to have the choice. It shouldn't be a way around the 40 hour work week. [*Applause*] Thank you.

I have asked the Congress—I think—I've asked the Congress to expand family and medical leave in a very narrow way just to give some time off to go to children's conferences at school and to take their children or their parents to regular doctor's appointments in a very limited fashion. I hope that will pass and find favor. And as I said, we've also proposed some other things in the retirement security area.

The last thing I would say is, I think that there are a lot of women who are outside their regular school years who deserve a second chance, who could make a major contribution to the economic life of this country. And the education proposals that are on the table in this Congress would be really helpful. If we pass the $1,500 a year tax credit for the first 2 years of college, it would in effect make community college education as universal as high school is today.

I also proposed a tax deduction of up to $10,000 a year for the cost of any high school—any tuition after high school, easier access to an IRA that you could withdraw from tax-free to pay for education, and the biggest increase in Pell grants in 20 years.

But I think these things are important. We need to remind ourselves that the average age of people in our educational institutions is going higher and higher and higher. Even in the 4 year colleges now, it's up to 25—26 in some of our 4 year colleges in America. Most of our community colleges, it's higher than that. And so having universal access so people can get a second chance, I think, is profoundly important. And I hope that you will support that. It's a big deal for our economy and a big deal for women's economic opportunity.

So these are the things that we're going to be pushing. If you have other ideas I hope you will do that and give them to us.

And the last thing I want to say is I hope you will continue to participate as partners with us. I went to a memorial service yesterday over at the Commerce Department for Ron Brown and the other people who were killed a year ago in Croatia. And I think one of the more important things that Secretary Brown did was to make sure that he emphasized women business leaders in these trade missions and reaching out to the rest of the world and trying to build ties. So I hope you will look for other opportunities to participate in that way and to continue to be a part of the partnership that we're trying to establish with America to create the kind of country we want for the 21st century.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:41 p.m. in the Indian Treaty Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Betsy Myers, Deputy Assistant to the President for Women's Initiatives and Outreach, and Maria Echaveste, Assistant to the President and Director of Public Liaison, White House; and Linda Tarr-Whelan, president and chief executive officer, Center for Policy Alternatives.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

April 2

The President declared a major disaster in the State of Washington and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery

efforts in the area struck by heavy rains, snow melt, flooding, and land and mud slides, March 18–28.

April 4

The President announced his intention to reappoint Robert A. Gaines as a member of the National Capital Planning Commission.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released March 31

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry, Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation Acting Director John Seal, Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy Ellen Seidman, Assistant Secretary of Labor Olena Berg, and National Economic Adviser Gene Sperling

Released April 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Released April 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Released April 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on the President's meeting with Prime Minister Guterres of Portugal

Released April 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary David Johnson, NSC Senior Director for Defense Policy and Arms Control Robert Bell, and Under Secretary of Commerce William Reinsch on the Chemical Weapons Convention

Acts Approved by the President

Approved March 31

S. 410 / Public Law 105–8
To extend the effective date of the Investment Advisers Supervision Coordination Act