

Week Ending Friday, August 3, 2001

The President's Radio Address

July 28, 2001

Good morning. This past week our country marked the 11th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. I'm proud that it was my father who signed that landmark legislation into law. And all Americans can take pride in the changes the ADA has brought into the lives of millions of citizens with disabilities.

Because of that law, Americans with disabilities have gained greater access to public places; they have more options in choosing their homes, using public transportation, traveling, and staying in hotels. Many have joined the workforce, thanks to reasonable accommodations made by their employers. This has made our country a fairer society, more considerate and welcoming to all our citizens.

As people with disabilities find more opportunities to use their gifts and talents, we also become a stronger, more productive nation. Some barriers remain, however, and as long as they stand, our work is unfinished.

In February I announced a plan called the New Freedom Initiative to expand even further the opportunities available to people with disabilities. This initiative will help more Americans with disabilities enter the workforce by improving transportation or making it easier to work from home. It will encourage private companies to develop new assistive technologies, like computer monitors for people with visual impairments, infrared pointers for people who cannot use their hands to operate a keyboard, and lighter wheelchairs to increase mobility. And my New Freedom Initiative will help community groups, churches, synagogues, mosques, and civic organizations to improve access for people with disabilities.

Many of these groups are trying their best to meet the requirements of ADA, and we will help them. We must also work to ensure that people with disabilities are not arbitrarily isolated or kept apart. I recently signed an Executive order requiring Federal agencies to work with State and local authorities to allow people with disabilities to move out of institutions and into community settings. I've also instructed the Attorney General and the Secretary of Health and Human Services to fully enforce title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, ensuring that no one is unjustifiably institutionalized.

My administration is also committed to requiring all Federal agencies to make sure that their Internet sites are more accessible for people with disabilities, both inside and outside the Government. We have made significant progress in advancing the New Freedom Initiative. But some of these reforms will require the Congress to provide the resources we need to fully implement the New Freedom Initiative and fulfill the promise of ADA.

All of these efforts will build on the progress we have made as a society since the Americans with Disabilities Act became law. During the last 11 years, we have opened the doors of opportunity to millions of people with disabilities, and together, we can ensure that everyone with a disability enjoys the respect that all citizens deserve.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:13 a.m. on July 27 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 28. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 27 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

**Remarks to the National
Organization of Black Law
Enforcement Executives**

July 30, 2001

Thank you all very much for that warm welcome. I am honored to be here for the 25th anniversary of NOBLE. And I want to welcome each of you to Washington.

I also thank you for giving me a chance to come and talk about a powerful tool to help you all do your job. And that tool is stronger communities and the willingness for our society to welcome faith-based and community-based programs at the grassroots level, all aimed at teaching our children right from wrong; all aimed at making sure there's hope in every neighborhood throughout America.

I want to thank Ida very much for her brief but meaningful introduction. *[Laughter]* I want to thank Leonard Cooke and Maurice Foster, as well.

I've got to say something about Hubert Bell. *[Applause]* Maybe I'd better not, Hubert. It sounds like you're doing pretty good. *[Laughter]* But Hubert was really a part of our family for a long period of time, and we appreciated his service and sacrifice. He protected my mother and dad, for which, of course, not only is their loyal son grateful, but so are they. And it's great to see you, Hubert.

Also riding with me today is a fine man who I, fortunately, convinced to serve our country as the Deputy Attorney General, from the State of Georgia, Larry Thompson. Larry, thank you for your service, as well.

You've always got to say something nice about the police chief in the community in which you live—*[laughter]*—just in case. *[Laughter]* In my case, just in case the liiver drives a little too fast. *[Laughter]* But Charles, thank you for your leadership. I first saw that in action during the inauguration, and he did a fantastic job, and so did the men and women who wear the uniform here in the Nation's Capital. Thank you for your service.

It's also a pleasure to be here today with many of the founding members of NOBLE and its membership. Thank you for giving me a chance.

NOBLE is one of America's most effective police organizations and a voice for justice around our great Nation. And I want to thank you for that. I want to thank you for serving as a conscience in many communities in America.

It's also an important part of law enforcement, the history of law enforcement in America. Until the sixties, few African-Americans could dream of wearing the policeman's uniform and badge. Even those given the authority of the badge sometimes did not get the respect they deserve. I'm told about a man named James Cherry in 1964 who became the first uniformed black officer in Jackson, Tennessee. And on his first house call to the home of a white resident, a woman opened the door and looked at him and said, "I don't want you. I want the real police."

Fortunately, times have changed in America. Fortunately, when Officer Cherry shows up to the door today, people are saying, "Thank you, Officer, for coming to help me. Thank you for your service." Folks in this country have realized law enforcement depends upon the participation of fine African men and women all across America. And I want to thank those officers for the commitment and the risks they take on a daily basis.

And we owe you something in return. We owe you something in return for your service, and that's justice. And that's why I've asked the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General to examine racial profiling. It's wrong in America, and we've got to get rid of it.

Law enforcement is one of the great callings in our society; it really is. It's a noble profession. It's also one of the great success stories of the past decade. Last month the Justice Department reported that violent crime fell almost 15 percent last year alone, the largest drop ever recorded. Across America, law enforcement is doing its job, and crime is in retreat.

Some examples of success have captured the attention of the Nation. When Superintendent Richard Pennington of the New Orleans Police Department was appointed in 1994, New Orleans was rated the most violent city in America. And the truth of the matter is, the police department had serious,