

her check worth more than \$11,000. None of the employees contacted would confirm the amount of their checks.

"It made me cry," said Reader in a shaky voice. "I think it was so generous of them. It was an amazing gesture."

Rollerblade spokesperson Deborah Autrey said, "It was a complete surprise that came out of the blue. People were laughing and crying and hugging. I have never seen people in such a stupor."

Autrey has worked at Rollerblade for four years. More than half of the employees are warehouse workers with most receiving hourly wages.

Naegele, who was chairman during the phenomenal growth of the 15-year old firm, could not be reached for comment. Two months ago he sold his 50 percent share of Rollerblade to Nordica Inc. of Italy for an undisclosed amount. He bought 50 percent of the in-line skate company in 1985, when sales were only \$500,000. Sales in 1994 were \$265 million.

In Christmas cards to employees, Naegele wrote that he had reaped great rewards from his Rollerblade investment because of the employees' hard work and that he wanted to show his thanks, Autrey said. Enclosed in the cards were the gift checks, on which the Naegeles paid federal taxes.

"That way the employees did not get hit with a double whammy. It is a tax-free gift," said Autrey.

The checks were mailed to employees' homes the week before Christmas. The first arrived on Dec. 21 to an employee who was home on maternity leave. From there word spread among the workers, and later that day it was confirmed by the company's chief executive, John Hetterick, who had only found out the day before.

When the good news reached Matt Majka, 33, the director of product marketing, he immediately phoned his wife, Kym, and asked her to open the mail. When she did, Majka heard sobs. He has been with the company for 11 years, making his check worth an estimated \$21,120.

"It was very moving," he said.

"It was very heartfelt for us. We were extremely shocked and extremely grateful for his generosity. . . . All the words he talked about for so many years—about teamwork and that we are a family—he put his words into action."

Majka and his wife have a 4-month-old baby and a 2-year-old son, and the Naegeles' gift went to start a college fund for them, he said. The couple also had a new IBM computer under the Christmas tree.

Reader said she bought bikes for her two children (and a bike baby carrier for the newest family member) and she plans to put some of the money away in savings.

Majka marveled at what the gift meant to scores of his co-workers. "There are some people who have worked in our warehouse and have been here for a long time," he said. "For some people, they have received a very substantial check, maybe half of their year's salary. It's pretty amazing." At least two employees have been there for all of the company's 15 years.

"I happened to talk to Bob [Naegele] later that night," Majka said. "I told him, 'You can't imagine the impact you have had on everyone.' He bellowed and said, 'That is just what I wanted to hear.' He said, 'This is not mine. It is a gift I had to share.'"

[From Time Magazine, Jan. 8, 1996]

THE GLOW FROM A FIRE
(By Steve Wulf)

Methuen, Massachusetts, is a small city not unlike the Bedford Falls of *It's a Wonderful Life*. Over the years, the working-class

town on the border of New Hampshire and Massachusetts has come to rely on the good heart of one man. While Aaron Feuerstein may not look much like Jimmy Stewart, he is the protagonist of a Christmas story every bit as warming as the Frank Capra movie—or the Polartec fabric made at his Malden Mills.

On the night of Dec. 11, just as Feuerstein was being thrown a surprise 70th birthday party, a boiler at Malden Mills exploded, setting off a fire that injured 27 people and destroyed three of the factory's century-old buildings. Because Malden Mills employs 2,400 people in an economically depressed area, the news was as devastating as the fire, according to Paul Coorey, the president of Local 311 of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. "I was standing there seeing the mill burn with my son, who also works there, and he looked at me and said, 'Dad, we just lost our jobs.' Years of our lives seemed gone."

When Feuerstein arrived to assess the damage to a business his grandfather had started 90 years ago, he kept himself from crying by thinking back to the passage from King Lear in which Lear promises not to weep even though his heart would "break into a hundred thousand flaws." "I was telling myself I have to be creative," Feuerstein later told the New York Times. "Maybe there's some way to get out of it." Feuerstein, who reads from both his beloved Shakespeare and the Talmud almost every night, has never been one to run away. When many other textile manufacturers in New England fled to the South and to foreign countries, Malden Mills stayed put. When a reliance on fake fur bankrupted the company for a brief period in the early '80s, Feuerstein sought out alternatives.

What brought Malden Mills out of bankruptcy was its research and development team, which came up with a revolutionary fabric that was extremely warm, extremely light, quick to dry and easy to dye. Polartec is also ecologically correct because it is made from recycled plastic bottles. Clothing made with Polartec or a fraternal brand name, Synchronia, is sold by such major outdoors clothiers as L.L. Bean, Patagonia, Eastern Mountain Sports and Eddie Bauer, and it accounts for half of Malden's \$400 million-plus in 1995 sales.

Even though the stock of a rival textile manufacturer in Tennessee, the Dyersburg Corp., rose sharply the day after the fire, L.L. Bean and many of Malden's other customers pledged their support. Another apparel company, Dakotah, sent Feuerstein a \$30,000 check. The Bank of Boston sent \$50,000, the union \$100,000, the Chamber of Commerce in the surrounding Merrimack Valley \$150,000. "The money is not for Malden Mills," says Feuerstein, "It is for the Malden Mills employees. It makes me feel wonderful. I have hundreds of letters at home from ordinary people, beautiful letters with dollar bills, \$10 bills."

The money was nothing to the workers compared to what Feuerstein gave them three days later. On the night of Dec. 14, more than 1,000 employees gathered in the gym of Central Catholic High School to learn the fate of their jobs and of the cities of Methuen and Lawrence. Feuerstein entered the gym from the back, and as he shook the snow off his coat, the murmurs turned to cheers. The factory owner, who had already given out \$275 Christmas bonuses and pledged to rebuild, walked to the podium. "I will get right to my announcement," he said. "For the next 30 days—and it might be more—all our employees will be paid their full salaries. But over and above the money, the most important thing Malden Mills can do for our workers is to get you back to

work. By Jan. 2, we will restart operations, and within 90 days we will be fully operational." What followed, after a moment of awe, was a scene of hugging and cheering that would have trumped the cinematic celebration for *Wonderful Life's* George Bailey.

True to his word, Feuerstein has continued to pay his employees in full, at a cost of some \$1.5 million a week and at an average of \$12.50 an hour—already one of the highest textile wages in the world. And even better than his word, Malden Mills was up and running last week at 80 percent of its Polartec capacity, thanks to round-the-clock salvage work and the purchase of 15 new machines. "I haven't really done anything," says Feuerstein. "I don't deserve credit. Corporate America has made it so that when you behave the way I did, it's abnormal."

Union chief Coorey begs to differ. Says he: "Thank God we got Aaron."

THE BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, almost 4 years ago I commenced these daily reports to the Senate to make a matter of record the exact Federal debt as of close of business the previous day. +

In that report of February 27, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$3,825,891,293,066.80, as of close of business the previous day. The point is, the Federal debt has increased by more than \$1.1 trillion—\$1,162,159,313,063.99—since February 26, 1992.

As of the close of business yesterday, Monday, January 22, the Federal debt stood at exactly \$4,988,050,606,130.79. On a per capita basis, every man, woman and child in America owes \$18,933.07 as his or her share of the Federal debt.

REPORT OF THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 111

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was ordered to lie on the table:

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of the 104th Congress, distinguished guests, my fellow Americans all across our land.

I want to begin by saying to our men and women in uniform around the world, and especially those helping peace take root in Bosnia, and to their families. Thank you. America is very proud of you.

My duty tonight is to report on the State of the Union, not the state of our government but of our American community, and to set forth our responsibilities—in the words of our Founders—to "form a more perfect union."

The State of the Union is strong.

Our economy is the healthiest it has been in three decades. We have the lowest combined rate of unemployment and inflation in 27 years.

We have created nearly 8 million new jobs, over a million of them in basic industries like construction and automobiles. America is selling more cars than Japan for the first time since the 1970's, and for 3 years in a row, we have

had a record number of new businesses started.

Our leadership in the world is also strong, bringing new hope for peace. And perhaps most important, we are gaining ground in restoring our fundamental values. The crime rate, the welfare and food stamp rolls, the poverty rate, and the teen pregnancy rate are all down. And as they go down, prospects for America's future go up.

We live in an Age of Possibility. A hundred years ago we moved from farm to factory. Now we move to an age of technology, information, and global competition.

These changes have opened vast new opportunities, but they also present stiff challenges. While more Americans are living better lives, too many of our fellow citizens are working harder just to keep up. And they are concerned about the security of their families.

We must answer three fundamental questions: How do we make the American dream of opportunity a reality for all who are willing to work for it? How do we preserve our old and enduring values as we move into the future? And how do we meet these challenges together, as one America?

We know Big Government does not have all the answers. There is not a program for every problem. We know we need a smaller, less bureaucratic government in Washington—one that lives within its means.

The era of Big Government is over. But we cannot go back to the time when our citizens were left to fend for themselves. Instead, we must go forward as one America—one nation working together, to meet the challenges we face together. Self-reliance and teamwork are not opposing virtues—we must have both.

I believe our new, smaller government must work in an old-fashioned American way—together with all our citizens, through state and local governments, in the workplace, in religious, charitable, and civic associations.

Our goal must be: to enable all our people to make the most of their own lives with stronger families, more educational opportunity, economic security, safer streets, a cleaner environment, a safer world.

To improve the state of our Union, we must ask more of ourselves; we must expect more of each other; and we must face our challenges together.

Our responsibility here begins with balancing the budget in a way that is fair to all Americans. There is now broad bipartisan agreement that permanent deficit spending must come to an end.

I compliment the Republicans for the energy and determination they have brought to this task. And I thank the Democrats for passing the largest deficit reduction plan in history in 1993, which has already cut the deficit nearly in half in just 3 years.

Since then, we have all begun to see the benefits of deficit reduction: lower

interest rates have made it easier for business to create new jobs, and have brought down the cost of home mortgages, car payments, and credit card rates to ordinary citizens. Now it is time to finish the job. Though differences remain among us, the combined total of the proposed savings common to both plans is more than enough, using numbers from your Congressional Budget Office, to balance the budget in 7 years and to provide a modest tax cut. These cuts are real; they will require sacrifice from everyone.

But these cuts do not undermine our fundamental obligations to our parents, our children, and our future by endangering Medicare, Medicaid, education or the environment, or by raising taxes on the hardest pressed working families.

I am willing to work to resolve our remaining differences. I am ready to meet tomorrow. But I ask you at least to enact these savings so we can give the American people their balanced budget, a tax cut, lower interest rates, and a brighter future.

We must make permanent deficits yesterday's legacy.

Now it is time to look to the challenges of today and tomorrow. Our Nation was built on challenges, not promises. When we work together to meet them, we never fail. That is the key to a more perfect union: our individual dreams must be realized by our common efforts.

Tonight, I want to speak about the challenges we face as a people.

Our first challenge is to cherish our children and strengthen American families.

Families are the foundation of American life. If we have stronger families, we will have a stronger nation.

Strong families begin with taking more responsibility for our children. It is hard to be a parent today; but it is even harder to be a child. All of us—our parents, our media, our schools, our teachers, our communities, our churches, our businesses, and government—have a responsibility to help children make it.

To the media: I say you should create movies, CD's and television shows you would want your own children and grandchildren to enjoy. I call on Congress to pass the requirement for a "V" chip in TV sets, so parents can screen out programs which they believe are inappropriate for their younger children. When parents control what their children see, that's not censorship. That's enabling parents to assume more responsibility for their children. And I urge them to do it. The "V" chip requirement is part of the telecommunications bill now pending. It has bipartisan support, and I urge you to pass it now.

To make the "V" chip work, I challenge the broadcast industry do what movies have done, to identify your programming in ways that help parents protect their children.

I invite the leaders of major media corporations and the entertainment industry to come to the White House next month to work with us on concrete ways to improve what our children see on television. I am ready to work with you.

I say to those who make and market cigarettes. Every year, a million children take up smoking; 300,000 of them will have their lives shortened as a result. My administration has taken steps to stop the massive marketing campaign that appeals to our children. We are saying: Market your products to adults, if you wish—but draw the line on children.

I say to those on welfare: For too long, our welfare system has undermined the values of family and work, instead of supporting them. Congress and I are near agreement on sweeping welfare reform.

We agree on time limits, tough work requirements, and the toughest possible child support enforcement. But we must also provide child care so that mothers can go to work without worrying about their children. So I challenge Congress: Send me a bipartisan welfare reform bill that will really move people from welfare to work and do right by our children, and I will sign it.

But passing a law is only the first step. The next step is to make it work. I challenge people on welfare to make the most of this opportunity for independence. And I challenge American business to give them a chance to move from welfare to work. I applaud the work of religious groups that care for the poor.

More than anyone else, they know the difficulty of this task, and they are in a position to help. Every one of us should join with them.

To strengthen the family, we must do everything we can to keep the teen pregnancy rate going down. It is still too high: Tonight I am pleased to announce that a group of prominent Americans is responding to that challenge by forming an organization that will support grass roots community efforts in a national campaign against teen pregnancy. And I challenge every American to join them.

I call on American men and women to respect one another. We must end the deadly scourge of domestic violence. I challenge America's families to stay together.

In particular, I challenge fathers to love and care for their children. If your family has separated, you must pay your child support. We are doing more than ever to make sure you do, and we are going to do more. But let's all admit: A check will never be a substitute for a father's love and guidance, and only you can make the decision to help raise your children—no matter who you are, it is your most basic human duty.

Our second challenge is to provide Americans with the educational opportunities we need for a new century.

Every classroom in America must be connected to the information superhighway, with computers, good software, and well-trained teachers. We are working with the telecommunications industry, educators and parents to connect 20 percent of the classrooms in California by this spring, and every classroom and library in America by the year 2000. I ask Congress to support our education technology initiative to make this national partnership successful.

Every diploma ought to mean something. I challenge every community, school, and State to adopt national standards of excellence, measure whether schools are meeting those standards, cut redtape so that schools have more flexibility for grassroots reform, and hold them accountable for results. That's what our Goals 2000 initiative is all about.

I challenge every State to give all parents the right to choose which public school their children attend, and let teachers form new schools with a charter they can keep only if they do a good job.

I challenge all schools to teach character education: good values, and good citizenship. And if it means teenagers will stop killing each other over designer jackets, then public schools should be able to require school uniforms.

I challenge parents to be their children's first teachers. Turn off the TV. See that the homework gets done. Visit your children's classroom.

Today, higher education is more important than ever before. We have created a new student loan program that has made it easier to borrow and repay loans; and dramatically cut the student loan default rate. Through AmeriCorps, our national service program, this year 25,000 students will earn college money by serving in their local communities. These initiatives are right for America; we should keep them going.

And we should open the doors to college even wider. I challenge Congress to expand work study and help one million young Americans work their way through college by the year 2000; to provide a \$1,000 merit scholarship for the top 5 percent of graduates in every high school; to expand Pell grant scholarships for deserving students; and to make up to \$10,000 a year of college tuition tax deductible.

Our third challenge is to help every American achieve economic security.

People who work hard still need support to get ahead in the new economy—education and training for a lifetime, more support for families raising children, retirement security, and access to health care.

More and more Americans are finding that the education of their childhood simply does not last a lifetime.

I challenge Congress to consolidate 70 overlapping job training programs into a simple voucher worth \$2,600 for unemployed or underemployed workers to

use for community college tuition or other training. Pass this GI bill for America's workers.

More and more Americans are working hard without a raise. Congress sets the minimum wage. Within a year, the minimum wage will fall to a 40-year low in purchasing power. Four dollars and twenty-five cents an hour is not a living wage. But millions of Americans and their children are trying to live on it. I challenge you to raise their minimum wage.

In 1993, Congress cut the taxes of 15 million hard-pressed working families, to make sure no parents who worked full time would have to raise their children in poverty. This expanded earned income tax credit is now worth about \$1,800 a year to a family of four living on \$20,000. The budget bill I vetoed would have reversed this achievement, and raised taxes on nearly 8 million of these people. We must not do that.

We need a tax credit for working families with children. That's one thing most of us in this Chamber can agree on. And it should be part of any final budget agreement.

I challenge every business that can possibly afford it to provide pensions for your employees, and I challenge Congress to pass a proposal recommended by the White House Conference on Small Business, that would make it easier for small businesses and farmers to establish their own pension plans.

We should also protect existing pension plans. Two years ago, with bipartisan support, we protected the pensions of 8 million working people and stabilized the pensions of 32 million more. Congress should not now let companies endanger their worker's pension funds. I vetoed such a proposal last year, and I would veto it again.

Finally, if working families are going to succeed in the new economy, they must be able to buy health insurance policies that they don't lose when they change jobs or when someone in their family gets sick. Over the past 2 years, over one million Americans in working families lost their health insurance. We must do more to make health care available to every American. And Congress should start by passing the bipartisan bill before you that requires insurance companies to stop dropping people when they switch jobs, and stop denying coverage for pre-existing conditions.

And we must preserve the basic protections Medicare and Medicaid give, not just to the poor, but to people in working families, including children, people with disabilities, people with AIDS, and senior citizens in nursing homes. In the past 3 years we have saved \$15 billion just by fighting health care fraud and abuse. We can save much more. But we cannot abandon our fundamental obligations to the people who need Medicare and Medicaid. America cannot become stronger if they become weaker.

The GI bill for workers, tax relief for education and child-rearing, pension

availability and protection, access to health care, preservation of Medicare and Medicaid, these things—along with the Family and Medical Leave Act passed in 1993—will help responsible hard-working American families to make the most of their own lives.

But, employers and employees must do their part as well, as they are in so many of our finest companies, working together, putting long-term prosperity ahead of short-term gains.

As workers increase their hours and their productivity, employers should make sure they get the skills they need and share the benefits of the good years as well as the burdens of the bad ones. When companies and workers work as a team, they do better. And so does America.

Our fourth great challenge is to take back our streets from crime, gangs, and drugs.

At last, we have begun to find the way to reduce crime—forming community partnerships with local police forces to catch criminals and to prevent crime. This strategy, called community policing, has begun to work. Violent crime is coming down all across America.

In New York City, murders are down 25 percent, in St. Louis 18 percent, in Seattle 32 percent. But we still have a long way to go before our streets are safe and our people are free of fear.

The Crime Bill of 1994 is critical to the success of community policing. It provides funds for 100,000 new police in communities of all sizes. We are already a third of the way there. I challenge the Congress to finish the job. Let's stick with a strategy that's working, and keep the crime rate coming down.

Community policing also requires bonds of trust between our citizens and our police. So I ask all Americans to respect and support our police. And to our police, I say: Our children need you as role models and heroes. Don't let them down.

The Brady bill has already stopped 44,000 people with criminal records from buying guns. The assault weapons ban is keeping 19 kinds of assault weapons out of the hands of violent gangs. I challenge Congress to keep those laws on the books.

Our next step in the fight against crime is to take on gangs the way we took on the mob. I am directing the FBI and other investigative agencies to target gangs that involve juveniles in violent crime and to seek authority to prosecute as adults teenagers who maim and kill like adults.

And I challenge local housing authorities and tenant associations: Criminal gang members and drug dealers are destroying the lives of decent tenants. From now on, the rule for residents who commit crimes and peddle drugs should be: One strike and you're out.

I challenge every State to match Federal policy: to assure that serious violent criminals serve at least 85 percent of their sentence.

More police and punishment are important, but not enough. We must keep more of our young people out of trouble, with prevention strategies not dictated by Washington, but developed in communities. I challenge all communities and adults to give these children futures to say yes to. And I challenge Congress not to abandon the crime bill's support of these grassroots efforts.

Finally, to reduce crime and violence, we must reduce the drug problem. The challenge begins at home, with parents talking to their children openly and firmly. It embraces our churches, youth groups, and our schools.

I challenge Congress not to cut our support for drug-free schools. People like DARE officers are making an impression on grade school children that will give them the strength to say no when the time comes.

Meanwhile, we continue our efforts to cut the flow of drugs into America. For the last 2 years, one man in particular has been on the front lines of that effort. And tonight I am nominating a hero of the Persian Gulf and the commander-in-chief of the U.S. Military's Southern Command, Gen. Barry McCaffrey, as America's new drug czar.

General McCaffrey has earned three purple hearts and two silver stars fighting for America. Tonight I ask that he lead our Nation's battle against drugs at home and abroad.

To succeed, he needs a force larger than he has ever commanded. He needs all of us. Every one of us will have a role to play on this team. Thank you, General McCaffrey, for agreeing to serve your country one more time.

Our fifth challenge is to leave our environment safe and clean for the next generation.

Because of a generation of bipartisan effort, we have cleaner air and water. Lead levels in children's blood has been cut by 70 percent, and toxic emissions from factories cut in half. Lake Erie was dead. Now it is a thriving resource.

But 10 million children under 12 still live within 4 miles of a toxic waste dump. A third of us breathe air which endangers our health. And in too many communities, water is not safe to drink. We still have much to do.

Yet Congress has voted to cut environmental enforcement by 25 percent. That means more toxic chemicals in our water, more smog in our air, more pesticides in our food.

Lobbyists for the polluters have been allowed to write their own loopholes into bills to weaken laws that protect the health and safety of our children. And some in this Congress want to make taxpayers pick up the tab for toxic waste and let polluters off the hook.

I challenge Congress to reverse those priorities. I say the polluters should pay. We can expand the economy without hurting the environment. In fact we can create more jobs over the long run by cleaning it up.

We must challenge businesses and communities to take more initiative in protecting the environment and make it easier for them to do so. To businesses, we are saying: If you can find a cheaper, more efficient way than government regulations require to meet tough pollution standards, then do it—as long as you do it right.

To communities, we say: we must strengthen community right-to-know laws requiring polluters to disclose their emissions, but you must use the information to work with business to cut pollution. People do have a right to know that their air and water are safe.

Our sixth challenge is to maintain America's leadership in the fight for freedom and peace.

Because of American leadership, more people than ever before live free and at peace, and Americans have known 50 years of prosperity and security. We owe thanks especially to our veterans of World War II. To Senator BOB DOLE, and all the others in this Chamber and throughout our country who fought in World War II and all the conflicts since, I salute your service.

All over the world, people still look to us. And trust us to help them seek the blessings of peace and freedom.

But as the cold war fades, voices of isolation say America should retreat from its responsibilities. I say they are wrong. The threats we Americans face respect no nation's borders: terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, drug trafficking, ethnic and religious hatred, aggression by rogue states, environmental degradation. If we fail to address these threats today, we will suffer the consequences of our neglect tomorrow.

We can't be everywhere. We can't do everything. But where our interests and our values are at stake—and where we can make a difference—America must lead.

We must not be isolationist or the world's policeman. But we can be the world's best peacemaker. By keeping our military strong, by using diplomacy where we can, and force where we must, by working with others to share the risk and the cost of our efforts, America is making a difference for people here and around the world.

For the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, there are no Russian missiles pointed at America's children. North Korea has now frozen its dangerous nuclear weapons program. In Haiti, the dictators are gone, democracy has a new day, and the flow of desperate refugees to our shores has subsided.

Through tougher trade deals for America, over 80 of them, we have opened markets abroad, and now exports are at an all-time high, growing faster than imports and creating American jobs.

We stood with those taking risks for peace, in Northern Ireland, where Catholic and Protestant children now tell their parents that violence must never return, and in the Middle East,

where Arabs and Jews, who once seemed destined to fight forever, now share knowledge, resources, and dreams.

And, we stood up for peace in Bosnia. Remember the skeletal prisoners, the mass graves, the campaigns of rape and torture, endless lines of refugees, the threat of a spreading war—all these horrors have now given way to the hope of peace. Now our troops and a strong NATO, together with its new partners from Central Europe and elsewhere, are helping that peace to take hold.

Through these efforts, we have enhanced the security of the American people. But important challenges remain. The START II treaty with Russia will cut our nuclear stockpiles by another 25 percent; I urge the Senate to ratify it—now.

We must end the race to create new nuclear weapons by signing a truly comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty—this year. We can outlaw poison gas forever, if the Senate ratifies the Chemical Weapons Convention—this year. We can intensify the fight against terrorists and organized criminals at home and abroad, if Congress passes the anti-terrorism legislation I proposed after the Oklahoma City bombing—now.

We can help more people move from hatred to hope, if Congress gives us the means to remain the world's leader for peace.

The six challenges I have discussed thus far are for all Americans. But our seventh challenge is America's challenge to us here tonight: to reinvent our Government and make our democracy work for them.

Last year, this Congress applied to itself the laws that it applies to everyone else, banned gifts and meals from lobbyists. It forced lobbyists to disclose who pays them and what legislation they are trying to pass or kill. I applaud you for that.

Now I challenge Congress to go further: curb special interest influence in politics by passing the first truly bipartisan campaign finance reform bill in a generation.

Show the American people we can limit spending and that we can open the airwaves to all candidates.

And I appeal to Congress to pass the line-item veto you promised the American people.

We are working hard to create a government that works better and costs less. Thanks to the work of Vice-President GORE, we are eliminating 16,000 pages of unnecessary rules and regulations and shifting more decision making out of Washington back to States and local communities.

As we move into an era of balanced budgets and smaller government, we must work in new ways to enable people to make the most of their own lives.

We are helping America's communities, not with bureaucracy, but with opportunity. Through our successful

empowerment zones and community development banks, we are helping people find jobs and start businesses. And with tax incentives for companies that clean up abandoned industrial property, bringing jobs back to the places that desperately need them.

But there are some areas that the Federal Government must address directly and strongly. One of these is the problem of illegal immigration. After years and years of neglect, this administration has taken a strong stand to stiffen protection on our borders.

We are increasing border controls by 50 percent, we are increasing inspections to prevent the hiring of illegal immigrants. And tonight, I announce I will sign an executive order to deny Federal contracts to businesses that hire illegal immigrants.

Let me be clear: we are still a nation of immigrants; we honor all those immigrants who are working hard to become new citizens. But we are also a nation of laws.

I want to say a special word to those who work for our Federal Government. Today, the Federal workforce is 200,000 employees smaller than the day I took office. The Federal Government is the smallest it has been in 30 years, and it is getting smaller every day. Most of my fellow Americans probably didn't know that, and there's a good reason. The remaining Federal workforce is composed of Americans who are working harder and working smarter to make sure that the quality of our services does not decline.

Take Richard Dean. He is a 49-year-old Vietnam veteran who has worked for Social Security for 22 years. Last year he was hard at work in the Federal building in Oklahoma City when the terrorist blast killed 169 people and brought the rubble down around him.

He re-entered the building four times and saved lives of three women. He is here with us this evening. I want to recognize Richard and applaud both his public service and his extraordinary heroism.

But Richard's story doesn't end there. This last November, he was forced out of his office when the Government shut down.

And the second time the Government shut down, he continued helping Social Security recipients, but he was working without pay.

On behalf of Richard Dean and his family, I challenge all of you in this Chamber: never—ever—shut the Federal Government down again.

And on behalf of all Americans, especially those who need their Social Security payments at the beginning of March, I challenge Congress to preserve the full faith and credit of the United States, to honor the obligations of this great nation as we have for 220 years, to rise above partisanship and pass a straightforward extension of the debt limit. Show them that America keeps its word.

I have asked a lot of America this evening. But I am confident. When

Americans work together in their homes, their schools, their churches, their civic groups or at work, they can meet any challenge.

I say again: The era of Big Government is over. But we can't go back to the era of fending for yourself. We must go forward, to the era of working together, as a community, as a team, as one America, with all of us reaching across the lines that divide us, rejecting division, discrimination and racism, to find common ground. We must work together.

I want you to meet two people tonight who do that. Lucius Wright is a teacher in the Jackson, MS public school system, a Vietnam veteran. He has created groups that help inner city children turn away from gangs and build futures they can believe in.

Sgt. Jennifer Rodgers is a police officer in Oklahoma City. Like Richard Dean, she helped pull her fellow citizens out of the rubble and deal with that awful tragedy. She reminds us that, in their response to that atrocity, the people of Oklahoma City lifted us all with their basic sense of decency and community.

Lucius Wright and Jennifer Rogers are special Americans. I have the honor to announce tonight that they are the very first of several thousand Americans who will be chosen to carry the Olympic torch on its long journey from Los Angeles to the centennial of the modern Olympics in Atlanta this summer—not because they are star athletes, but because they are star citizens—community heroes meeting America's challenges—our real champions.

Now each of us must hold high the torch of citizenship in our own lives. But none of us can finish the race alone. We can only achieve our destiny together, one hand, one generation, one American connecting to another.

There have always been things we could do together—dreams we could make real—which we could never have done on our own. We Americans have forged our identity, our very union, from every point of view and every point on the planet. But we are bound by a faith more powerful than any doctrines that divide us—by our belief in progress, our love of liberty, and our relentless search for common ground. America has always sought and always risen to the challenge.

Who would say that, having come so far together, we will not go forward from here? Who would say that this Age of Possibility is not for all Americans?

America is—and always has been—a great and good country. But the best is yet to come. If we all do our part.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 4:12 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by

Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 1606. An act to designate the U.S. Post Office building located at 24 Corliss Street, Providence, RI, as the "Harry Kizirian Post Office Building."

H.R. 2061. An act to designate the Federal building located at 1550 Dewey Avenue, Baker City, OR, as the "David J. Wheeler Federal Building."

The enrolled bills were signed subsequently by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

At 5:31 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1341. An act to provide for the transfer of certain lands to the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian community and the city of Scottsdale, AZ, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. HELMS (for himself, Mr. FAIRCLOTH, Mr. HATCH, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. WARNER, Mr. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mrs. KASSEBAUM, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. KYL, Mr. NICKLES, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. BURNS, Mr. HATFIELD, Mr. HEFLIN, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. LOTT, Mr. ASHCROFT, Mr. KEMPTHORNE, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. FRIST):

S. 1520. A bill to award a congressional gold medal to Ruth and Billy Graham; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. DOLE:

S. 1521. A bill to establish the Nicodemus National Historic Site in Kansas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. ABRAHAM (for himself and Mr. LEVIN):

S. 1522. A bill to provide for the transfer of six obsolete tugboats of the Navy; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. DORGAN (for himself, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. DASCHLE, and Mr. EXON):

S. 1523. A bill to extend agricultural programs through 1996, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. EXON (for himself and Mr. KERREY):

S. Res. 210. A resolution to commend the Cornhuskers of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln for winning both the 1994 and 1995 National Collegiate Athletic Association Football Championships back-to-back; considered and agreed to.

S. Res. 211. A resolution to commend the Cornhuskers of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln for winning the 1995 National Collegiate Athletic Association Women's Volleyball Championship; considered and agreed to.