The Telecommunications Act of 1996 will strengthen our economy, our society, our families, and our democracy. It promotes competition as the key to opening new markets and new opportunities. It will help connect every classroom in America to the information superhighway by the end of the decade. It will protect consumers by regulating the remaining monopolies for a time and by providing a roadmap for deregulation in the future. I am pleased to have signed this historic legislation.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,
February 8, 1996.

NOTE: S. 652, approved February 8, was assigned Public Law No. 104–104.

## Statement on Signing Temporary Debt Extension Legislation

*February 8, 1996*

A nation's financial integrity is a sacred trust. To preserve our creditworthiness, we must honor all obligations of the United States. Through the Civil War, two World Wars, and the Depression, America has paid its bill and kept its word.

Last week, congressional leaders acknowledged the importance of protecting our Nation's creditworthiness. They made a commitment in a letter to pass a mutually acceptable debt limit increase by February 29th to ensure that the United States does not default on our obligations.

Congress also took a constructive step by passing H.R. 2924 which I am signing today. This law provides temporary debt relief that allows us to meet all of our obligations and to pay Social Security and other benefits, military active duty pay, and other commitments at the beginning of March. Congress has promised to secure a mutually acceptable debt limit increase. Today, I call on Congress to pass a straightforward, long-term debt limit increase immediately so that we can get on with our shared goal of balancing the budget without the threat of default hanging over our Nation.

NOTE: H.R. 2924, approved February 8, was assigned Public Law No. 104–103.

## Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion With Families on the V-Chip in Alexandria, Virginia

*February 9, 1996*

***The President.*** First of all, I'd like to thank our host for welcoming us in, and to all the members of the press and our guests here. As you know, yesterday I signed into law the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which is the first major overhaul of our telecommunications laws in six decades.

That bill will do an enormous amount of good for our country. It will, for consumers, open up vast new opportunities for entertainment, vast new opportunities for information, vast new opportunities for different kinds of communications. It will create many, many thousands of high-wage jobs. But it will also bring a lot more images and messages into every home in America.

One of the things that the Vice President and Mrs. Gore and I like so much about this bill is that in addition to getting the benefits of the telecommunications revolution, it gives more power to parents to control what their young children see on television by requiring all new television sets to have a V-chip in them.

So we wanted to come here today to discuss with these folks how they feel about it and to give them and to give you a chance to see how this will work. So I'd like to turn it over to the Vice President and give him a chance to make a demonstration and to comment.

*At this point, the Vice President demonstrated the technology, and the roundtable discussion then proceeded.*]

***The President.*** Let me just say one final thing about this. Maybe we ought to change the name from the V-chip to parent power chip. [*Laughter*]

One of the things that we talk about all the time, to go beyond this, is that all these technological changes that are going on in the world are so wonderful in so many ways. They're making opportunities for people to do things they never could do before. But if we're not careful, they also make the majority of the people feel that they're losing control of their lives in many ways, not just

this way, in many ways. And I think anything we can do to harness the power of new technology, to give people more control back over their lives, their family lives, the workplace, the community, that's a good thing. We don't want people to feel powerless.

One of the things that frustrates people in this country is they feel like there are all these forces out there running around working on their lives, and they have no control over them. And this is maybe just one small step, but it's a way of saying to people that new technologies can put you back in the driver seat in your lives, not take you further and further out of them.

Thank you. Thanks again for having me here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. at the residence of Ric and Jean Voigt.

Later in the day, the Office of the Press Secretary released a transcript of the complete roundtable discussion, which was not received in time for inclusion in this issue and will be published in next week's issue.

## Remarks to the Louisiana Economic Development Brunch

*February 9, 1996*

***The President.*** Thank you so much. Senator Johnston, I appreciate that, especially since you don't have to run for reelection, that you said such a nice thing. [*Laughter*]

Senator Johnston, Senator Breaux, Congressman Hayes, Chairman Livingston—that's a nice tie for you. You're going to change your whole image up here. [*Laughter*] Thank you. Lieutenant Governor Blanco, ladies and gentlemen. John Breaux told me I should come to this event. He said, this is the largest number of people in my State that you will ever see at one time when they're all in a good humor. [*Laughter*]

I'm really going to miss Bennett Johnston in the Senate. I always find it so helpful to have him there in getting my budgets passed. All I had to do was give 40 percent of all the discretionary money to Louisiana and—[*laughter*]—things went right through. It was easy.

The person in this audience that I really envy today is Buddy Leach. I'm a President, he's a king. [*Laughter*] I have to run for office, he doesn't have to get elected anymore. [*Laughter*] I have to persuade; everybody has to agree with him. [*Laughter*] Do you want to switch jobs? [*Laughter*]

Let me say to all of you—I want to, first of all, just kind of take my hat off to the State of Louisiana for coming up here and doing this event every year, and for the level of cooperation that you have throughout your State in trying to develop your economy. I know we've got people here from all over the State, from all the communities, and I really think it's a good thing to do.

I guess if I had to say the thing that surprised me most about becoming President when I was elected, as compared with being Governor of your neighbor to the north, it is that the atmosphere is much more partisan than I expected it to be, and that the way we were presented to the rest of the country was even more partisan than we are, the way that the story sort of spins out across the country. And I went home after I'd been President about 4 months, and we were sitting around with a bunch of my friends, and I said, "Shoot, if all I knew about me was what I saw on the evening news, I wouldn't be for me either." [*Laughter*]

And we have tried to sort of move away from that. Mr. Livingston and I tried. We played golf one day, and the course was so hard it took us 6 hours to finish the round. But by the end of it I completely lost any sense of partisan difference.

I want to say to you that yesterday we did something here that, to me, is the embodiment of what we ought to be doing as we look toward the future. I signed the telecommunications bill into law yesterday, a bill that was passed almost unanimously with overwhelming bipartisan support, the first significant reform of our communications laws in over six decades.

Everyone concedes that it will create tens of thousands of high-wage jobs, perhaps hundreds of thousands of high-wage jobs for America; that it will give vast new opportunities to ordinary citizens for communications, for information, for learning, and for entertainment. It also embodies some of our most sacred values. The Congress required that all new television sets, after a couple of years,