grieve for the injuries that were there, I think that is important.

So I would say that they have done a good a job as could be done, particularly at the events. They were always concerned about any open area where you have so many people operating in an open area. And they are examining what can be done, what should be done there during this period when the criminal investigation is going on.

Q. Mr. President, Chelsea has been at the Olympics all this past week. Speaking as a father, what is your own personal reaction to this? Would you not feel some sense of anger that more might have been done to prevent this strategy, but what is your first personal reaction to this?

The President. Well, my first personal reaction was—I thought about it last night, of course, because she was in the park quite often and visited the pin exchange place there. And I was—my first personal reaction was that I hope nobody else's children get hurt down there.

But I would say to you that these people have done a very good job planning and bringing off this Olympics. And I don't think anyone believes that we live in a risk-free world. And I think it's important not to jump to any conclusions about who did or didn't do what here. We'll look into this, and we will find who's responsible.

But on balance, I still would say to you I feel good about the efforts they have made there. They had worked very, very hard. And we just have to keep working. And they are examining, even as we speak—you know, the Vice President's been heavily involved in this. And we talked about it last night when he and I both were awakened, and then we had a visit. We talked about it again this morning. They're examining even as we speak whether there is some way to increase the security at the centennial park and still make it a place where a larger number of people who cannot either obtain or could not afford tickets to the events themselves can come and go. Everyone always knew that was the most open and most vulnerable place.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Briefing Room at the White House and the address was broadcast live on radio and television. In his remarks, he referred to Juan Antonio Samaranch, president, International Olympic Committee; William P. Payne, president, Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games; Gov. Zell Miller of Georgia; and Mayor Bill Campbell of Atlanta, GA.

Teleconference Remarks to "Adelante Con Clinton" Participants

July 27, 1996

The President. Hello.

Secretary Henry Cisneros. Mr. President, this is Henry, and Federico's on the line as well and almost 50 other locations across the country, sir.

Secretary Federico Peña. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. Good morning.

Secretary Cisneros. Mr. President, we appreciate you being able to be with us, given the circumstances in Atlanta. I admire your statement of just a few moments ago to the country. And we know your time is very short, but we deeply appreciate your reserving some time to make a short statement to these communities across America. We have over 1,000 people in homes all across the country ready to roll out their "Adelante Con Clinton '96" effort, and we just appreciate your being here.

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you, Henry. Thank you, Federico. And I want to thank all the others who are there today, the Members of Congress and the other leaders, the call leaders: Jose Villareal, Don Mares, Peggy Anastos, Ray Sanchez, E.J. Salcinas, and Mayor Joe Serna, Luis Gutierrez, Freddy Ferrer, everyone else, thank you for doing this.

All of you know what happened at the Olympics last night. And I was up most of the night getting reports and following it. So I'm sorry I can't spend as much time as I planned to on the call. I want to thank you for the work you've done, and I'm looking forward to meeting with you, working with you. And as you know, "Adelante Con Clinton" is very important to what we're trying to do this year. And every one of you should know how much I personally appreciate it.

I want to say also a word, if I might, about how saddened Hillary and I were to hear yes-

terday about the death of Dr. Hector Garcia. We had both known him for more than 20 years, and he was to us a real American hero. From his service in World War II to his work as an ambassador through the American GI Forum, which he founded, and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights on which he served, he was a clear voice for Hispanic civil rights. And I just wanted to say to all of you we should honor him best by committing ourselves to continue the work of his life. He was a remarkable man.

The other thing I'd like to say, just very briefly, is that it seems to me that as much as any group of Americans, Hispanic-Americans embody the spirit of what I have been trying to do as President to bring more opportunity to all Americans; to insist on more responsibility from all Americans for themselves, their families, their communities, and their country; and then to try to build a deeper sense of community that unites us. In this new world, I think the most important thing we can do is to give people the tools they need to build better lives for themselves. Secretary Cisneros is trying to empower people who are eligible for housing assistance to make more decisions on their own. And with our public-private partnership, we've now cut by $1,000 the average closing costs for first-time homebuyers. That's a remarkable thing.

That's what the Family and Medical Leave Act is designed to do. That's what the V-chip and the television rating systems for parents is designed to do. That's what our initiative to keep tobacco from being advertised and distributed and sold to young people is designed to do. That's what the EITC, the earned-income tax credit, which dramatically lowered taxes for working families with children who are on modest incomes, took 850,000 Hispanic-Americans alone out of poverty, that's what that's designed to do.

That's what our education initiative is designed to do, making it easier for people to go to college, give people the tools they need to build their own lives. That's what our investments in infrastructure and technology, the things that Secretary Peña and others in our administration have done to invest in the economy—it's all designed to give people the tools they need. That's what our anticrime program was designed to do.

And I think it's very important that we continue to focus on that and to bringing our people together, not dividing them. And that's why I have opposed the outright repeal of bilingual education programs or putting in our bill on illegal immigration the denial of education to children of undocumented immigrants. I think that would be a big mistake, and things like the excessive cuts to children of legal immigrants in the welfare reform bill or the CCRI in California.

These things that tend to divide people I think weaken our country when what we ought to be doing is pulling our country together around our shared values to meet the challenges of the 21st century. We should be more concerned about how we can hook up every classroom in America to the Internet by the year 2000 than by whether we should be kicking a few kids out of our classroom who'd be much better off in school than on the street.

And that is sort of in a nutshell what I want this election debate to be about. And I want our people to be on the side of opportunity, responsibility, and community, bringing us together. This terrible incident in Atlanta reminds us once again that the forces in the world today that are out to divide us are the enemies of democracy, the enemies of freedom, the enemies of decency. And we have to stand against it.

And I just want to thank all of you for being there and wish you well. And also, I want to, as I sign off—as I said, I wanted to thank all the Congress Members who are on the call. And I think Representative Gutierrez, Representative Velázquez, and perhaps Representative de la Garza are on the phone. But I wanted to say a special word of appreciation to Kika de la Garza who was such a distinguished Member of Congress all these years and is a great committee chairman and a wonderful friend to me. I wanted to thank him for that and thank all of you for doing this phone call today.

And again, please forgive me. I haven't had a lot of sleep, and I've got to go back to the matters at hand. But I'm profoundly grateful to you.

[*At this point, Secretary Cisneros thanked the President for his participation.*]

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much, all of you. God bless you, and have a good day.

NOTE: The President spoke by telephone at 11:13 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on Welfare Reform

July 27, 1996

Good morning. Today I want to talk with you about welfare reform, but first I want to ask you to join with me in celebrating the sixth anniversary of a landmark civil rights law that is breaking down barriers for millions of our fellow Americans, the Americans With Disabilities Act. I'm joined today by many of the advocates for people with disabilities who made this the law of the land. Because we have enforced this law vigorously and with common sense, people with disabilities now have access to places they never did before, from classrooms to restaurants.

Since 1991, 800,000 people with severe disabilities have joined the work force. Because of Federal education efforts, tens of thousands of children with disabilities have better educational opportunities. Because of Medicaid, health care for Americans with disabilities can be provided without bankrupting their families and in a way that promotes their independence.

That's a big reason why I oppose repealing Medicaid's guarantee of health care to Americans with disabilities. All these efforts are good for them, but they're good for all the rest of us, too. So today let us all rededicate ourselves to the fight against disability discrimination.

This morning I want to focus on the great welfare debate now unfolding in Washington and all across our country. This debate is really about our fundamental American values, about expanding opportunity, demanding responsibility, and coming together as a community. For decades our welfare system has undermined the basic values of work and responsibility and family, trapping generation after generation of people in poverty and dependency, exiling millions of our fellow citizens from the world of work that gives structure, meaning, and dignity to our lives. It instills the wrong values, sends the wrong signals, giving children who have children a check to set up house on their own, letting millions of fathers walk away from their responsibility while taxpayers pick up the tab.

This system does the most harm to the people it was meant to help. Children who are born to a life on welfare are more likely to drop out of school, fall afoul of the law, become teen mothers or teen fathers, and raise their own children on welfare themselves.

I just don't believe that a nation as rich in opportunity as ours is willing to leave millions of people trapped in a permanent under class. We can't leave anyone behind. In fact, what I want for poor families on welfare is what I want for middle class families and upper income families as well. I want people to be able to succeed at home and at work. That will make America stronger and their lives richer.

When I ran for President 4 years ago, I was very clear we must end welfare as we know it. And during my time as President, I've used all the powers at my disposal to achieve that goal. We've worked with 41 States to launch 69 welfare-to-work experiments. For fully 75 percent of people on welfare, the rules already have changed. The New York Times called it a quiet revolution in welfare.

I've taken executive action to require teen mothers on welfare to stay in school, requiring mothers to identify the fathers of their children so we can hold every man accountable for the support he owes his family, ordering Federal employees to pay child support, putting wanted posters of deadbeat parents in post offices and on the Internet. I directed the Attorney General to crack down on people who owe child support who cross State lines.

All these efforts are paying off at the national and local level. Today there are 1.3 million fewer people on welfare than on the day I took office. Child support collections are up 40 percent, to $11 billion. Paternity identification is up 40 percent, too. We're mending our social fabric and moving in the right direction.