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Sweden and the U.S. share a deep and unswerving commitment to peace, and Sweden is a vital partner in our global nonproliferation efforts. A model peacekeeper, Sweden has shown its commitment to this function of collective security many times, with distinction, in the United Nations system. Sweden has taken a firm stand against terrorism, supporting our efforts to bring to justice those who sabotaged Pan Am Flight 103. And during the Gulf war, Sweden provided humanitarian and economic assistance.

Our partnership in the service of freedom and democracy is not a new one. Americans and Swedes share more than 350 years of friendship, dating back to 1638 when the Kingdom of Sweden established a colony along the Christina River in Delaware. American patriots of Swedish origin fought in our Revolutionary War and signed the Declaration of Independence. Sweden was one of the first nations to sign a treaty of friendship and commerce with a newly independent United States.

That legacy of partnership continues today on contemporary issues, for example, through the new investor visa arrangements our Government agreed upon today. And after today's talks I am confident that this friendship will continue to flourish.

Mr. Prime Minister, let me explain to you our sincere thanks for this new spirit of cooperation and friendship. It strengthens our relations. And your visit has clearly helped build the basis for a solid partnership as we face together the challenges that lie ahead.

Thank you for coming our way. And the best of luck to you, sir.

Note: The President spoke at 1:19 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on Senate Action on Energy Legislation

February 20, 1992

Last night the Senate passed S. 2166, the National Energy Security Act of 1992, which marks a substantial milestone in implementing the President's national energy strategy issued one year ago today. This legislation will lead to the creation of hundreds of thousands of jobs and keep billions of dollars from flowing overseas for the purchase of foreign oil between now and the year 2010. The bill includes increased conservation, promotes the use of alternative fuels for motor vehicles, and permits greater use of natural gas. We are extremely pleased that the Senate passed the President's legislation, and we urge the House to also act soon on this vital administration program.

Remarks to the American Legislative Exchange Council

February 21, 1992

Thank you for the welcome. May I thank Fred Noye and Sam Brunelli and all the others assembled here. This has become an annual ritual, one that I look forward to very, very much. I don't know whether Jack Kemp is here—he was going to be; been here. And Sam spoke. I have great confidence in both of them. But I really wanted just to come over and say a few words, express my greetings to all of you.

Thinking of ALEC, I wanted to talk here about how you get things done, the key to good government. And Americans, I think, sensible ones, know that the Federal Government simply cannot do everything and shouldn't even try. It could get the job

done and then let everybody else do his or her job. At ALEC, you get things done. And I want to help you do what you do best, and that is to lead and to innovate.

So, we want to take $14.7 billion, maybe Sam talked to you about this, in Federal program funds and turn them over to the States as a block grant. And that way people who run the programs can do what works rather than following some distant bureaucrat's notion of what works. We tried it last year, didn't get it; we're trying it again this year. I hope we can make some headway, even though it is an election year.

Another one, welfare reform. Our system too often promotes dependency and not independence. And so we've asked the departments to go back and the agencies to go back and make it easier to obtain the waivers that are necessary to institute welfare reform. Workfare's a good example. Learnfare, like they're doing in Wisconsin, is a good example. And the States are innovating. It is their responsibility, and we are trying to give them the support through waivers. So I would suggest where you see hangups on it, let us know because we are trying to see that there is not bureaucratic opposition to moving forward with these flexible approaches that require waivers. These reforms create, actually, the most important ingredients for success, and that is personal power and personal responsibility.

We're getting more money to States for the important things, programs that work. We've increased spending on education, on Head Start, conservation fund grants, and I'm sure Sam mentioned this, transportation. And don't think for a minute that we measure progress simply in terms of dollars; we do not. We measure it by results, and we fund these programs because they work. Head Start helps us achieve our six educational goals. Kids starting school ready to learn—this year we funded it so that every 4-year-old will have that opportunity.

So, we're moving forward on what we feel works. Jack's program, that I'm supporting him on and have been trying to get through Congress, the HOPE program, H–O–P–E, enabling low-income families to own homes. And I like HOPE for a simple reason: It is a sensible program, and it makes good sense. And when you own a home, I think we all understand, you own a piece of the community. And you have a dignity and a self-respect that simply cannot be equaled in any other way. You all look at the world differently. You have an interest in improving your assets, and you have an interest in safer, cleaner, better communities. And let me simply say, HOPE works.

This pork barrel spending—there was an amazing article on that in the paper today—doesn't, and we've asked Congress to eliminate, totally eliminate, 246 programs. All of them have noble titles. All of them have wonderful titles, and all of them have sponsors in Congress. But they are not needed. And we are in tough financial times, and so we're trying to get rid of 246 of them and put the money where it gets results.

And at the same time, we've asked Congress to take a few steps to bolster confidence in Government and to strengthen the economy. We need real tools to cut spending. And I want that line-item veto. We're going to keep on pressing for it. In signing statements, I have said that we'll refute, we just are not going to accept some of the language, and so far that's gone on through in the bills that I have signed. But we want a line-item veto, and again, I'm going to take the case to the people for this in the fall.

I want a balanced budget amendment. We couldn't do it overnight, obviously. But if we got it, it would discipline not just the executive branch, but it would discipline the United States Congress which appropriates every dime and tells us how to spend every single dime. We've got to cut the deficit without raising taxes, and if that takes an amendment, let's get the amendment and get the job done.

Secondly, I want Congress to stop passing these unfunded mandates. If there is one thing we hear the most about from States, from Governors or State reps or State senators, it is unfunded mandates. And a Federal mandate is a promise that's made up there on Capitol Hill and then paid for back on Main Street. But the subcommittee chairmen up there have not changed their thinking at all. One program after another

is mandated, and thus a big burden placed on the States. And so we say to Congress: Stop passing the buck back. If you pass a mandate, pay for it, and don't go and raise taxes.

Third, I want to put a lid on nuisance lawsuits. You know, the law should foster progress, not hinder it. When fathers stop coaching Little League because they fear lawsuits, there's something wrong. And we've gone way too far. When doctors stop delivering babies because they fear lawsuits, something's wrong. And when people stop volunteering to help other people because they fear ambulance-chasing lawyers, something is wrong. And the madness must stop.

We have legislation up there in the Congress sitting dormant. And here's one where we can take the case to the American people in the fall. It transcends party lines. It transcends ideology, liberal, conservative. It just does not make sense to have so many of these lawsuits settled in such an outrageous fashion. So, we are going to take that case clearly and loudly to the American people this fall. The madness has got to stop.

We've drafted a model act to help people engage in voluntary service without fear of unfair suits. And I hope your States will use this model to draft your own tort reform laws. Alabama, as Perry was telling me and reminding me because I've known it, put together such a statute, got it passed in less than 4 months. Perry Hooper—where is he, he was here right a minute ago—right over here, sponsored the legislation, and we're very proud of what he's done. It's a model for other States, and it makes me redouble our efforts here to get something done on the Federal level.

I've asked Congress to act upon our "Access to Justice Act" which encourages people to seek alternatives to court. And it used to be a joke; you'd get upset and someone would say, "Don't make a Federal case out of it." Now the joke's on us, and we've got to turn that around. People still turn small squabbles into lawsuits, and they sit in courtrooms listening to lawyers bicker about problems that should have been solved some way, over a cup of coffee at home maybe.

The "Access to Justice Act," and I urge you to take a look at it, provides alternatives and puts an end to this madness. And I'd like to challenge you to pass your own "access to justice" reforms. Lead the way. And then I think that will send a powerful message to the United States Congress.

The Council on Competitiveness here, under the able leadership of Vice President Dan Quayle, has prepared two model State statutes which are outlined for you in the packets that I am told you were given today. Take it home, and think it over, and craft your own antilitigation laws. Wouldn't it be nice to create a law that results in fewer lawsuits?

And I don't like to have this many influential people gathered here without soliciting your support, for you to ask Congress to do its part to help the economy. We've got a good plan. It is good. There's a lot of special interests don't like parts of it, but it is a good, sound, stimulative plan. It will protect today's jobs, and it will create new jobs for tomorrow.

Congressional leadership also has a plan. And it will protect today's congressional seats, and it'll promise action tomorrow. So, we are locked in a real fight up there. We're short on numbers, but we've got the facts and we've got the merits on our side.

So I've given Congress a long-term plan, longer—I'd like to see it pass this year—to build the foundations for the next American century, an America that is healthy and well-educated and confident and free and better in research and technology, all of these things.

The health care plan, incidentally, that I came out with fits perfectly with yours. It improves our health care system, which provides the highest quality care on Earth. We've got health care problems, but one of them is not the quality of American health care. It is the best in the entire world.

And so, our program doesn't knock that aside to pass some mandated nationalized program. It gives everybody access to health insurance. And it lets people choose where to get treatment, which doctors they like. And when people make these choices, they feel more comfortable; they get treatments sooner, much sooner than under these nationalized programs. And our plan

provides something better than socialized medicine's false promises: health care itself. So I urge you to take a look at this one. I think philosophically it will be right in tune with what we all believe.

My administration also understands that we've got to meet the challenges that lie over the horizon, the challenges of the 21st century. And our America 2000 education strategy encourages revolution, a new generation, literally, a new generation of American schools. It stresses excellence. It stresses accountability. It stresses involvement. It stresses choice. And choice closes the gap between the kitchen table and the teacher's desk. It gets families involved in education. And it gives parents power over their children's schooling. And I urge you to take a look at that program again. A lot of it does not have to be enacted in Federal legislation. A lot of it can be done simply through innovation at the State and certainly at the local level.

The family really, when you look at the problems, is the key to our future. The mayors of cities in the National League of Cities, their executive board came in to see me. I mentioned this in the State of the Union. And all of them—Mayor Bradley of Los Angeles, a great big city; the Republican Mayor of a small town in North Carolina of about 2,000; and in between, Mayor of Plano, Texas, and cities of that size—all came together, and they said, "The biggest worry we've got that clearly works against these problems in the cities is the decline of the American family."

And family is a key to our future. It's been said that the best Department of Health and Human Services is the family. And it is. And it's also been said that what happens in your house—this was a quote by the famous Silver Fox that lives with me over in the White House, Barbara Bush—it's also been said that what happens in your house—and this is the way she put it, and I think it's very relevant—is more important than what happens in the White House.

And it's true. It is very, very true. And so I've asked this Commission that these mayors suggest we set up, this Commission on Urban Families, to find family policies that work, to ferret out Federal legislation that works against the family, to suggest Federal legislation that might bring the family together and might make an errant parent more responsible. Our laws shouldn't encourage a single-parent household or fail to punish men who abandon their children and the mothers. They should promote whole and healthy families.

That's what the purpose of that Commission is. And then when we get its suggestions, I really want to share them with ALEC and other groups because I believe you'll find some real merit in what this Commission will come up with. I'm confident I know the direction they're going to take.

So, these are in the longer term proposal. But I've also submitted a short-term economic plan. And that provides two essentials for families in our Nation, jobs and security. And this plan—I've challenged the Congress to move on it by March 20—stimulates investment. It energizes the real estate industry, and it cuts taxes that inhibit growth. And I've asked Congress, as I say, to pass it by March 20th, 4 weeks from today.

Now, very candidly, we're caught up in a political season here. And I have not been happy with what's come out of the Ways and Means Committee so far. The Democratic leaders have come up with a sorry plan. They want higher taxes, and they want higher spending. And they hope to buy off the people with a tiny temporary tax cut. If you belong to an average family of four, their scheme will give you about a quarter a day. And even the tooth fairy pays more than that in there. [*Laughter*]

And we Americans, we want a large and expanding economy that offers new options and challenges and that holds the promise of job security and employment opportunity. And frankly, I think the country has a reason to join me in being tired of the games being played. For 3 straight years we've tried to get a capital gains tax reduction. It would stimulate jobs. And all the people that control Congress do is say, "Well, it's a tax sop for the rich. This is a break for the rich." It isn't. When the Steiger amendment was passed in '78, new businesses were created; new jobs were created. And it would have the same effect

now.

And we're competing in this world. And Japan has a capital gains tax, an effective tax of about one percent; Germany, I think it's zero. And we're asked to compete then with two hands tied behind our back in this important world competitive market which we cannot turn our back on.

And so, we're going to keep fighting for these things that stimulate this economy and get it moving. It is my conviction that if our first-time homebuyer credit is passed, and if our incentive through rapid depreciation is passed, and if our capital gains cut is passed—these are three of our seven points in this short-time program—it would send a signal of confidence to this economy. You don't have to see the effect of it when tax time rolls around. It will give a stimulation of confidence to the small-business guy that might just say, "I'm going to take a chance. I'm going to open a business here."

And so, we really need help now trying to encourage the Congress to pass this program by March 20th. And out of the budget agreement of 1990, which had things in there I didn't like, there was one good thing in it. There were a couple of things that were pretty good. But there was one good thing in it: For the first time in history, we put caps, meaningful caps, on discretionary Federal spending. The critics forget that. Those caps are in place. They can work. Federal spending's up because you have S&L's, you've had bank problems, enormous problems outside of this. You've had the entitlements going up; they're outside of the caps. But the caps are the only protection the taxpayer has against the growth of discretionary Federal spending.

And now, as the election approaches, you hear a lot of talk by the Democrats, "We want to change it. We want to change the caps, knock down the walls." Please help me keep those caps in place. I will veto any attempt to change it, but we're going to need help to keep those caps in place, to protect the taxpayer as best we can until we can get some Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to share the values that you certainly epitomize and advocate.

So we're in a fight here. And I am going to take this one all the way. After March 20th they say, "Well, what are you going to do?" I say, "Well, I don't know," because I'm not going to give up until March 20th on trying to get this sensible, short-term, stimulative program through the Congress. But I guarantee you, if we fail, the message is going to be loud and clear. And we'll put it in very clear focus so the voters next fall are going to be able to make their determination as to what should have been done and those who stood against it.

So again, I would solicit your help in the time that remains between now and March 20. Help us on the short-term program. Advocate the things you agree with us on on the longer term program, all the things I've mentioned on education and research and family credits. These things are very, very helpful for the future.

So, thank you for what you're doing. I'm glad you came by. I wish we had a little more time, but I'm heading off to the South. You guess why.

Thank you all very much.

Note: The President spoke at 11:42 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Fred Noye, chairman, and Sam Brunelli, executive director of the council, and Perry Hooper, a council member from Alabama.

Letter Accepting the Resignation of John E. Frohnmayer as Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts

February 21, 1992

Dear John:

I received your letter of resignation today and, with sincere thanks and appreciation for your service, I accept your resignation effective May 1.

I recall your coming to talk to me about