

somewhere, I'm embarrassed I don't remember where. They were asking the American people, this survey, is the President spending enough time on the economy, is the President spending enough time on health care, and a bunch of other questions. Only half the people said I was spending enough time on the economy even though that's what I spend all my time on. By two to one the people said I was spending enough time on health care. Why is that? Because the effort of the health care task force, chaired by my wife, to come up with a health care program is the subject of intense speculation because it hasn't been presented yet. So, given the propensity of people in Washington to leak, there's a new story every day about some little paper or another that's come out and all that. And then they have these public hearings, so there's a lot of anticipation.

The economic program was announced one month into my Presidency, and then I went to work on it in Congress. And what really is news is sort of around the edges; is he losing this or winning that or whatever. It becomes a process debate, and the American people tend to lose sight of what is the major focus of my every day, which is how to pass that jobs pro-

gram and the economic program. That is simply a function of the way the news works.

The other thing I think is different about the news today than maybe 20 years ago, particularly for the coverage around Washington, is this: Because of CNN and others who now give virtually continuous direct access to the facts of whatever is going on to wide numbers of people, there is even more pressure than there used to be on everybody in the media to find an angle to the story, a unique angle, an insight, you know, a twist. And sometimes that's good, and sometimes it's not. But it always presents a different challenge to me than perhaps the President might have had 20 years ago in trying to keep the focus of the public on the big issues that I'm trying to deal with.

But I say that not as a criticism but simply as an observation. That is simply the way things are. On balance we're better off. People are getting more information more quickly than ever before, but it's changed the dynamics of how we relate to each other.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. in Dahlgren Hall at the U.S. Naval Academy.

## Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Child Immunization Legislation

*April 1, 1993*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

I am pleased to transmit for your immediate consideration and enactment the "Comprehensive Child Immunization Act of 1993". Also transmitted is a section-by-section analysis.

This legislation launches a new partnership among parents and guardians; health care providers; vaccine manufacturers; and Federal, State, and local governments to protect our Nation's children from the deadly onslaught of infectious diseases. The legislation is a comprehensive initiative to remove existing barriers to immunization. It will ensure that all children in the United States are immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases by their second birthday. Because of the importance of this initiative to the health of our children, I am transmitting this legislation in advance of my proposal for

comprehensive reform of the Nation's health care system, which I expect to submit to the Congress in May.

Beginning in fiscal year 1995, the bill would authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to purchase and provide childhood vaccines in quantities sufficient to meet the immunization needs of children in the United States. It would also institute a national immunization tracking system through grants to the States to establish State immunization registries. In addition, the bill contains provisions to ensure that the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, an essential link in our Nation's immunization system, remains operational. Funding for the program of vaccine purchase and distribution will be identified in my legislation for broad-based reform of the national health care

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system and made available beginning in fiscal year 1995 from the Comprehensive Child Immunization Account in the United States Treasury.

Immunizations are cost-effective. For example, the measles vaccine saves over \$10 in health care costs for every \$1 invested in prevention. We know that children are most vulnerable before their second birthday and that approximately 80 percent of vaccine doses should be given before then. Many children, however, do not receive even their basic immunizations by that age. We must remove the financial barriers to immunization that impede children from being vaccinated on time, and facilitate development of a national tracking system to ensure children are immunized at the earliest appropriate age.

The problem posed by soaring vaccine costs is exacerbated by a deteriorating immunization infrastructure. This legislation continues the rebuilding of our capacity to deliver vaccines and educate parents started in my economic stimulus package.

This proposal would direct the Secretary to purchase and provide vaccine without charge to health care providers who serve children and are located in a State that participates in the State registry grant program. In nonparticipating States, free vaccine would be distributed to Federal health care centers and providers, including those serving Indian populations. Health care providers could not charge patients for the cost of the vaccine. They could, however, impose

a fee for its administration, unless such a fee would result in the denial of vaccine to someone unable to pay. The authority of the Secretary established under this legislation, to purchase and provide vaccines, shall cease to be in effect beginning on such date as may be specified in a Federal law providing for immunization services for all children as part of a broad-based reform of the national health care system.

In addition, the bill would provide for a collaborative Federal and State effort to track the immunization status of the Nation's children. It would authorize the Secretary to make grants to States to establish and operate State immunization registries containing specific information for each child in the State. Entering infant birth and immunization data into registries will enable identification of children who need vaccinations and will help parents and providers ensure that children are appropriately immunized.

A keystone of the Nation's vaccine immunization effort is the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program. This legislation would authorize payments from the Vaccine Injury Compensation Trust Fund for compensable injuries from vaccines administered on or after October 1, 1992, and would reinstate and permanently extend the vaccine excise tax.

I urge the Congress to take prompt and favorable action on this legislation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
April 1, 1993.

## Nomination for Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services

*April 1, 1993*

The President announced today that he will nominate June Gibbs Brown, a former Inspector General at the Department of Defense, NASA, and the Department of the Interior, to be Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services.

"HHS is the biggest civilian Agency of the Federal Government," said the President, "and it is imperative that it be managed as efficiently as possible. That is one of the central tasks

that Secretary Shalala has taken on, and I am very pleased to be nominating someone of June Gibbs Brown's stature as Inspector General."

NOTE: A biography of the nominee was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.