

Appointment of White House Liaison to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

April 14, 1993

The President has named Loretta Avent, his Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Affairs, to be the White House Liaison to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the White House announced today.

“Too often in the past, the Federal Government has not been a very good neighbor to the rest of the Washington area,” said the Presi-

dent. “I am committed to changing that relationship and have full confidence in Loretta’s ability to act effectively to make the White House a full partner in the affairs of the region where we live.”

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

Remarks to Law Enforcement Organizations and an Exchange With Reporters

April 15, 1993

The President. Good afternoon. Ladies and gentlemen, 2 months ago I presented a comprehensive plan to reduce our national deficit and to increase our investment in the American people, their jobs, and their economic future. The Federal budget plan passed Congress in record time and created a new sense of hope and opportunity in the country. Then the short-term jobs plan I presented to Congress, which would create a half a million jobs in the next 2 years, passed the House of Representatives 2 weeks ago. It now has the support of a majority of the United States Senate.

All of these Members of Congress know it’s time to get the economy moving again, to get job growth going again, to get a fast start on the investments we need to build a lasting prosperity. Unfortunately, a minority of the Members of the United States Senate have used gridlock tactics to prevent their colleagues from working the will of the majority on the jobs bill.

When Congress returns, I ask every Senator from every State and from both parties to remember what is at stake. The issue is not politics, it’s people. Sixteen million of them are looking for full-time jobs and can’t find them. These men and women don’t care about who’s up or down in Washington. They care about paying the rent and meeting the mortgage payment, about putting food on the table and buying shoes for their children, about regaining a

sense of dignity that comes from doing a day’s work and supporting their families and drawing a paycheck. They’re asking those of us who have the privilege of serving to put aside politics and do something now to move our economy forward.

I am prepared to do that. And I have been working with the Senate to come up with an adjusted package that meets some of the concerns of those who’ve been blocking action on the jobs plan. I’m willing to compromise, so long as we keep the focus on jobs, keep the focus on growth, and keep the focus on meeting unmet national needs.

Our opponents have been asking for a smaller package. Today I ask them to join me in determining exactly what kind and what size package Congress can approve that actually meets the needs of the American people.

But even as we make those reductions, and the package will be smaller, I believe we must address problems that are on the minds of millions of Americans, and one in particular, and that is the need to toughen law enforcement in our society to deal with the dramatic rise in violent crime.

So I will ask, even in this reduced package, for an additional \$200 million in Federal funding to help local communities to rehire police officers who have been laid off because of the fiscal problems caused by the national recession. Together with a matching effort by local govern-

ments, this could put as many as 10,000 police officers back on the job and back on the beat in communities all across our Nation. At a time when too many of our people live in fear of violent crime, when too many businesses have closed and too many people have lost their jobs because people are afraid to leave their homes, rehiring thousands of officers is one of the best investments America can make. And I ask both Houses of Congress to make that investment in our people's safety and in their peace of mind.

I believe in the need for strong Federal action to keep the economy going toward recovery and to create jobs. Make no mistake about it: I will fight for these priorities as hard as I ever have. I will never forget that the people sent me here to fight for their jobs, their future, and for fundamental change.

I want to thank the police officers who are here today and tell you that not a single one of them knew before they came here that I had determined to ask for more money in this jobs bill to rehire police officers. They came here because they believe in the summer jobs portion of the package. And I want them to be free to talk about that. They came here not out of any law enforcement concern other than the fact that they wanted the kids in this country to have a chance to have jobs this summer, to have safer streets and a brighter and more peaceful future.

I say what I say today not just because it's good for law enforcement but because it's good for the people who live in these communities. I have always supported community policing, not only because it helps to prevent crime and to lower the crime rate but because it cements better relationships between people in law enforcement and the people that they're hired to protect. It reduces the chances of abusive action by police officers and increases the chances of harmony and safe streets at the same time.

These are the kinds of things that we are trying to do. I promised in my campaign that I'd do everything I could to put another 100,000 police officers on the street over the next 4 years. This makes a good downpayment on that. This keeps in mind the core of the jobs package. And this will help us to move forward.

So I ask the people in the Senate who have blocked the jobs bill, let's work together. I can accept a reduced package if you will increase your commitment to safe streets. I do not accept

the fact that we should reduce our commitment to summer jobs or to building our infrastructure or to doing those other things that will create real and lasting prosperity for our people. I have done my part now to end the gridlock; I ask you to do yours.

I want now to give the people who are here with me on the platform a chance to make some remarks and to be heard by the American people, beginning with Janet Reno, the distinguished Attorney General.

[At this point, Attorney General Reno spoke, followed by Robert T. Scully, executive director, National Association of Police Organizations; Raymond McGrath, president, International Brotherhood of Police Officers; Robert B. Kliesmet, president, International Union of Police Associations; and Dewey R. Stokes, national president, Fraternal Order of Police.]

Value Added Tax

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us, do you think that the jobs package could be put in further jeopardy by controversy over the suggestion of a VAT tax at this point in the congressional dialog?

The President. Oh, no, not at all. I think it should have—they wouldn't have any relationship one to the other. First of all, I've made absolutely no decision on that. You should know that there's a lot of support in the business community and the labor community. People have asked us to consider that because of the enormous burden of the present system on many of our major employers, particularly many of those that we depend upon to generate jobs and to carry the strength of this economy. But I have made absolutely no decision that would even approach that, on that or any other kind of general tax.

Q. Do you personally believe that the American public is ready to have another tax to pay for health care? I mean, apart from what business and labor leaders have said—

The President. I'm not going to speculate on that. I will say this: The real issue is how quickly we could recycle the benefits of all the savings to cover the cost. Everyone knows that if you do what we're proposing to do, if you streamline the insurance system, if you fix the system so that there's no longer an enormous economic incentive to overutilize or overprovide certain services, if you provide primary and preventive

care in places where it isn't now, every single analysis shows absolutely massive savings to the health care system. The real question is whether you can transfer those savings to cover those who have no coverage now or those who have virtually no coverage so that you provide people the security.

I have no idea. The polls say that, but I don't know. All I know is the polls that I see in the press, that many of you have commissioned, they say overwhelmingly the American people want the security of an affordable health care system.

But I don't think that has anything to do with this stimulus, and it certainly shouldn't have. People want a job first and foremost. They want that more than anything else.

Yes.

Stimulus Package

Q. Now that you've announced your willingness to compromise on the stimulus package, can you tell us what parts of your package you consider vital and uncompromisable? I assume summer jobs is one.

The President. I want the summer jobs, I want the highway program, and I want the police program. Let me say this: I still intend to fully and aggressively push the crime bill, which did not pass the Congress last year. This is a supplement to that, not a substitute for it in any way. But I think we need to do that.

I think we need the Ryan White funds because of the enormous health care burdens to the communities that are inordinately and disproportionately affected by the problems of caring for people with AIDS. And there are several other things that I think should be done. We

have to do the Agriculture Department meat inspectors; the safety of the public depends on that.

I don't think any of it should be cut, but I have given Senator Mitchell and Senator Byrd—I've talked to them. And Senator Dole called me yesterday to discuss this, and I told him that I would call him back. I called him back last night in New Hampshire, and we discussed this. And I basically asked them to talk today and said that I would not make any statements about any specifics until at least they had a chance to talk to see whether or not they could reach some accord.

So I don't want to be any more specific than I have been already. And let's see if they can talk it out.

Yes.

Q. When you talked to Senator Dole and Senator Mitchell did you tell them about your—*[inaudible]*—increase also, that \$200 million, that you want that as part of the package?

The President. I did. I left word for Senator Mitchell last night about it. When I talked to Senator Dole—I don't remember for sure—I do not believe I mentioned it. But I did tell him that I was prepared to reduce the package and I wanted to break the gridlock. And I told him that I was working on a reformulation of it in the hope that it would become even more focused on jobs and the kinds of issues that I thought the American people wanted us to address. And this is certainly consistent with that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:52 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Nomination for Posts at the United States Information Agency and the Board for International Broadcasting

April 15, 1993

The President today announced his intention to nominate American University president and former State Department Assistant Secretary Joseph Duffey to be Director of the United States Information Agency. The President also designated Daniel Mica Chairman of the Board for International Broadcasting.

“Joe Duffey's expertise in the fields of education, communications, and foreign affairs is vast and will serve him well as he takes the helm at USIA and works to promote the ideals of democracy and freedom abroad,” the President said.

Mr. Mica becomes Chairman of the Board