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things, we will be issuing other reforms that if you just ask for them, we'll say yes within 30 days. This is very important.

Now, let me be clear. Congress still does need to pass national legislation. Why? Because I don't think you ought to have to file for permission every time you do something that we already know has worked and that other States are doing. Because we do need national child support standards, time limits, work requirements, and protections for children. And we do need more national support for child care.

I hope these efforts that I'm announcing today will spur the Congress to act. But we don't have to wait for them, and we shouldn't. We can do much more. If every State did the five things that I mentioned here today, every State, we would change welfare fundamentally and for the better. And we ought to begin it, and we shouldn't wait for Congress to pass a law.

There is common ground on welfare. We want something that's good for children, that's good for the welfare recipients, that's good for the taxpayers, and that's good for America. We have got to grow the middle class and shrink the under class in this country. We cannot permit this country to split apart. We cannot permit these income trends which are developing to continue. We have to change it. You will not recognize this country in another generation if we have 50 years, instead of 20 years, in which half of the middle class never gets a raise and most of the poor people are young folks and their little kids. We have to change it. And we can do it.

But we have to remember what we're trying to do. We're trying to make the people on welfare really successful as workers and parents. And most important, we're trying to make sure this new generation of children does better.

A few months ago I was down in Dallas, visiting one of our AmeriCorps projects. And I saw two pictures that illustrate why I think this issue is so important. One, I was walking with a young woman who was my tour guide on this project. She was a teen mother, had a child out of wedlock, thought she had done the wrong thing, went back and got her GED, and was in the AmeriCorps program because she wanted to work in this poor community to help them and earn money to go to college. But the second person I met was the real reason we ought to be working for welfare reform. I met a young woman who was very well-spoken. She told me she had just graduated from a university in the Southeast. But she was working on this anyway, even though she really didn't have to go on to college anymore. And I said, "Why are you doing this?" She said, "Because I was born into a family of a welfare mother. But I had a chance to get a good education; I got a college degree. And I want these young people to come out like I did."

Now, that's the kind of citizen we want in this country. Those are the kind of people that will turn these disturbing trends around. Those are the kind of people that will enable us to come together and go forward into the future.

We owe them that. And we can do it. You and I can do it now. Congress can do it this year. And every one of us ought to do our part.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:45 p.m. by satellite at the Sheraton Burlington Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Howard Dean of Vermont, chair, and Gov. Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin, vice-chair, National Governors' Association; and Mayor Peter C. Brownell of Burlington, VT.

Statement on Oil and Gas Drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf

July 31, 1995

The Government today has reached an agreement protecting sensitive coastal areas off Florida and Alaska from oil drilling, which has been prohibited since 1988, through Democratic and Republican Presidencies.

Concern for our coasts is part of the common ground we share as Americans, not only in the areas protected today but in places as different as California, Massachusetts, Oregon, New Jersey, and Washington. Once sensitive areas are

damaged—beaches, the fishing industry, tourism—our natural heritage suffers greatly.

This settlement is good for the environment, good for taxpayers, good for the economy, and fair to the oil companies.

I am pleased that Secretary Babbitt and Attorney General Reno reached this agreement with the oil companies. We celebrate today with the citizens of Florida and Alaska, and I pledge continued protection of our coasts.

Remarks on Congressional Action on Appropriations Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters

August 1, 1995

The President. Good morning. Looking over the last few days, it is clear that this Congress is on the wrong track. I began the year hoping to make bipartisan progress on balancing the budget, on reducing paperwork, reforming regulation and welfare. And therefore, I was very pleased last week when a bipartisan majority voted to reject the extreme anti-environment provisions adopted in the House committee. That was the right thing to do.

But then the lobbyists for the polluters went to work. They got the leadership of the House of Representatives to call the bill back up. And last night, in a remarkable exercise of special interest power, the House voted to gut environmental and public health protections. It was a stealth attack on our environment in the guise of a budget bill.

The bill would effectively end Federal enforcement of the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act, a bill that my Republican predecessor said was his proudest legislative achievement. It allows poisons in our drinking water, raw sewage on our beaches, oil refineries to pollute, and limits a community's right to know what chemicals are toxic which are released in their neighborhoods. It would be bad for our children, our health, and our environment.

This is Washington special interest politics at its most effective and at its worst. Even before the 17 special interest provisions were added, the bill had already dramatically undercut environmental protection by cutting environmental enforcement in half.

You don't need to damage the environment to balance the budget. Our budget demonstrates that, and the budget the American people get out of this session of Congress ought to demonstrate that. In the past few days, a battalion of lobbyists has swarmed Capitol Hill, exerting enormous pressure to save these loopholes. I said I would use the power of my office to help people, not polluters. I believe we can protect the environment and grow the economy.

So on this so-called environmental bill, my message to the American people should be very, very clear: Don't worry. We'll make commonsense reforms. But the minute this polluter's protection act hits my desk, I will veto it.

One of the most interesting things that has achieved not too much notice in the last few days is that while Congress has been taking care of the special interests, it's also taking care of itself. It is way behind schedule on virtually every budget bill, in the hope, apparently, of enforcing a choice at the end of this fiscal year between shutting the Government down and adopting extreme budget cuts which will be bad for our country, bad for our economy, and bad for our future. Apparently, they don't even plan on letting the American people see their planned Medicare cuts until the last possible minute. But one bill, wouldn't you know it, is right on schedule, the bill that funds the Congress, its staff, and its operations.

I don't think Congress should take care of its own business before it takes care of the people's business. If the congressional leadership follows through on its plan to send me its own funding bill before it finishes work on the rest of the budget, I will be compelled to veto it.

I want to work with Congress to pass a balanced budget that protects the health and the security of the American people, a balanced budget that strengthens our economy and raises the incomes of our people and the future prospects of our children. But we have to remember in order to do this that all the special interests have to be subordinated to the broader public interest. That is not happening now, but we