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Remarks During "In Performance at the White House"
May 6, 1996

Thank you very much. There is another benefit to you that we heard them all practicing, which is you won't have to endure our impulse sing-along night. We did that yesterday. [*Laughter*]

The two artists with us tonight are classic examples of the splendid, intricate tapestry of American music. Both have expanded their own musical horizons and ours as they have woven the richness of their own heritage into popular culture.

In 1993, these Grammy Award winners performed during the inaugural celebration for Hillary and me and for all of America. They were truly a highlight of that extraordinary week. This evening we are thrilled to have them join us for the first time here at the White House.

It has been said of Aaron Neville that when he sings, "It's like a knowing angel who has experienced both Heaven and the gritty reality of a working man's life." Aaron's style reflects the lush multicultural mix of his native city of New Orleans. He has blended rock and funk, gospel and country, and rhythm and blues to create the rich, exciting sound that is unmistakably all his own.

Our other guest reflects the finest spirit of our great country. Her willingness to experiment while maintaining the best of the past has helped her sell more than 30 million recordings. By combining the mariachi sounds of Mexico, big band swing, rock and roll, Broadway, and opera, she has won devoted followers everywhere in the music world. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce Linda Ronstadt.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Teleconference Remarks on Kick Butts Day From Woodbridge, New Jersey
May 7, 1996

[*The President's remarks were joined in progress.*]

The President. ——And we have proposed an FDA regulation to crack down on—[*inaudible*]. We've proposed ways to make it harder for children and for teenagers to buy cigarettes by reducing their access to vending machines and free samples. But we also need people who are—[*inaudible*]—be more rigorous. We just spoke to three young people here who said they had no trouble at all buying cigarettes. Two were 16 and one was 13, and they said the overall success rate was something like 74 percent for the students in the middle and high schools who—[*inaudible*]—to buy cigarettes. So we're going to have to work on that.

I just want to say that I believe that this is a problem we can solve if we work together, if we see young people like these young people here working with their parents, their schools, their communities to fight against the lure and the availability of smoking for teenagers. And we're going to do what we can at the national level to do our part as well.

Mark Green, I want to especially thank you for your role in making today happen and for being a critical national leader on this issue; for your successful campaign to ban cigarette machines in New York City in 1990; to your leadership in organizing this national effort. You've really been a pioneer, and we're very grateful to you. And I thought you might like to give a brief overview of this day.

Can you hear me, Mark? We may have lost him.

[*Mark Green, New York City public advocate, said that Kick Butts Day is an opportunity for kids to talk back and fight back against the tobacco merchants and that it is a way to discourage kids from starting to smoke. He then described the effectiveness of tobacco ads di-*

rected at children and praised Kick Butts Day as an effort to educate children.]

The President. Thank you very much, Mark. And I want to say again how much I appreciate the work you have been doing. You have been out there on this issue a long time, and I think the country is coming around. And I think that the young people like those who joined me here today are going to play a critical role in helping us to defeat this problem.

I would like to ask Governor Chiles of Florida, if he is on the phone, to say a few words. He has had a terrific fight in Florida in his efforts to protect children from the dangers of smoking, and I honor him for his courage and his determination not to back down in the face of intense pressure.

Governor Chiles?

[*Governor Lawton Chiles said he was with a group of PRIDE children from several schools, high school students who put on performances with antidrug messages. He added that the Florida Legislature had not overridden his veto and the State's lawsuit against tobacco companies is going forward. The Governor then introduced student Lamont Tinker who indicated that smoking is bad for the whole body and that the Kick Butts campaign is a good thing.*]

The President. Thank you.

Governor Chiles. Mr. President, Lamont and myself and all the kids at Pine View and all of our PRIDE young people are just delighted to have a chance to join with you today.

The President. Thank you, Governor. And I want to thank that young student. He did a terrific job.

I want to say again to the young people who are listening on this call, you can very often have a lot more influence on your peers than the rest of us can. And I'll keep working in Washington to do what we should be doing at the national level, but you have to do your part in making sure that in your community people don't sell cigarettes to minors, that we don't have an excessive exposure to advertising directed at young people. And you can do it. You can have an impact on your classmates not to start smoking, and we can turn this around.

So if we all work together, we'll be successful. And again, I want to thank you all for being a part of this Kick Butts Day and for being a part of a commitment to give your generation a healthy and strong future.

God bless you all, and thank you very much.

Governor Romer, are you on the phone?

Governor Romer. Yes, I am.

The President. Would you like to say a word about your efforts in Colorado?

[*Governor Roy Romer introduced Colorado, California, and Texas students active in the antismoking campaign. He then introduced a student who had participated in a Butt Out Day survey of local stores in which she found tobacco products in the same aisle with candy and ice cream.*]

Governor Romer. Mr. President, thank you. I just wanted to give you a report from the West. I really appreciate your leadership in this effort.

The President. Thank you. And I want to thank Ageno and the other students for the work they did on the survey, and for their reports.

Keep after it. We'll keep working, and we'll keep moving forward. I feel very good about this. The degree of the intensity that so many young people in America feel about this issue is the most hopeful thing about it, and we just all need to stay in there with them and keep working. We can whip this thing.

Thank you all very much, in all the 11 cities on the phone, thank you very, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke by telephone at 1:25 p.m. from Woodbridge High School to participants across the Nation. In his remarks, he referred to Ageno Otii, a student at Morey Middle School, Denver, CO. Due to telephone difficulties, the President's opening remarks were inaudible, and a portion of the remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.