

Statement on the Death of Representative Frank Tejeda *January 31, 1997*

Hillary and I were saddened to learn today of the death of Congressman Frank Tejeda. Congressman Tejeda spent the last years of his life not only fighting for the citizens of San Antonio but also courageously battling cancer. Frank was a friend who dedicated himself to serving his country and community. He will long be remembered for his perseverance in the face of adversity. He endeared himself to all who

knew him, always looking out for the best interests of his constituents, members of the military, and the Hispanic and veterans' communities in particular. We will miss him greatly. Our thoughts and prayers are with his children, Marissa, Sonya, and Frank, his mother, Lillie, his extended family members, and his many friends at this difficult time.

Statement on Funding for International Family Planning *January 31, 1997*

In the next few weeks, Congress will face an important vote about the United States' support for voluntary family planning in developing countries.

The funds to continue our support have already been approved, as part of our Fiscal Year '97 budget. At issue is whether the money will be released on March 1, or whether it will be further delayed by 4 months, until July.

It is my determination that a delay will cause serious, irreversible, and avoidable harm. In the balance are the lives and well-being of many thousands of women and children and American credibility as the leader in family planning programs around the world.

Opponents of this funding have tried to mischaracterize this upcoming vote and the work of United States Agency for International Development in family planning. So, let me be clear: The United States provides family planning support where it is wanted and needed. We are prohibited by law from ever funding abortion—and we abide faithfully by that law. Indeed, the work we have funded in developing countries has been supportive of families, helping them to flourish. It has improved women's health and women's station in life. It has allowed generations of children to grow and be educated in safer and healthier environments. It has been instrumental in helping to prevent the spread of disease, including AIDS. And, make no mistake: It has prevented untold numbers of abortions and maternal deaths. This much is clear:

In preventing abortions, maternal and child deaths, family planning has been proven effective.

If we delay support for family planning by even 4 months, denying safe and effective contraception to couples who depend on these programs, we will see a rise in unintended pregnancies and maternal deaths and a tragic recourse to unsafe and unsanitary methods to terminate those pregnancies.

I want to emphasize this vote should have nothing to do with partisan politics. In fact, right now, a bipartisan group of legislators in the House and the Senate are hard at work to pass this bill for the timely release of funds. And for a generation, through administrations led by both parties, the United States has led the world in family planning programs. Studies show that our efforts, as part of an international strategy, have prevented more than 500 million unintended pregnancies.

Rapid population growth undermines economic and social development in poor countries. With our support for family planning, the scarce resources in developing countries—from infrastructure and environment to nutrition and education—can be better used to allow progress for their people.

Maintaining and building on this progress depends on our being consistent in our actions and adhering to our values.

Cooperative international efforts to address rapid population growth serve American foreign

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policy interests in protecting the Earth's environment, promoting human rights, and improving basic standards of health. It enhances the social, economic, and political status of women. It ensures global economic progress and strong markets for United States exports. It encourages international stability and it reduces pressures that lead to refugee flows and migration.

I appeal to the Members of Congress to examine the consequences of a delay, to weigh those against the benefits of fulfilling an urgent and continuing American commitment, and to

vote for the March 1, 1997, unconditional release of these voluntary international family planning funds.

If Congress fails to take this simple action, we risk a cost to humanity that we will bear well into the next century.

Surely, we agree that we must do all we can to prevent unintended pregnancies and abortions. With passage of this bill, we can do that. The decision is now in the hands of the Congress.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Funding for International Family Planning

January 31, 1997

Dear _____:

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 518A(d) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1997 (Public Law 104-208) (the "Act"), I hereby find that the July 1, 1997, limitation on obligations imposed by subsection (a) of section 518A is having a negative impact on the proper functioning of the population planning program. Subject to a joint resolution of approval by the Congress to be adopted no later than February 28, 1997, as specified in section 518A(d) of the Act, funds for these activities

may be made available beginning March 1, 1997.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; and Robert L. Livingston, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

The President's Radio Address

February 1, 1997

Good morning. As a parent, I know how important it is to take responsibility for our children when they need us most; when they're sick, when they need to go to the doctor, or when there's a parent-teacher conference at school. Fortunately, Hillary and I have never had to risk our jobs to be there for our daughter. We've never had to make the choice between being good parents and good workers.

Today I want to talk with you about what we have done and what more we must do as a people to give that same assurance to every

American family. One of the things I wanted most to do when I became President was to help parents succeed both at home and at work. That's why I was so proud to make the Family and Medical Leave Act the very first bill I signed as President, exactly 4 years ago this Wednesday. Family and medical leave allows people in companies with 50 or more employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a newborn or a newly adopted child or to be with a family member who is seriously ill without fear of losing their job.