

Jan. 31 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997

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.

Today, over half of all American workers share this important benefit, people like Christy Sens, a first-grade teacher from Fairfax, Virginia, who is here with me today. Christy was among the first Americans to make use of the new family leave law in 1993 when she and her husband were expecting their first child. She thought she would be forced to choose between the 6 weeks her school allowed her for new mothers or taking a whole year off without pay. Because of our new law, she was able to spend 12 full weeks at home recovering from her pregnancy and spending precious time with her new daughter. Christy used the benefit again in 1995 for the birth of her second child.

Family leave is not only family-friendly, it's employer-friendly as well. Also with me today is Stan Sorrell, president and CEO of the Calvert Group, an investment firm in Bethesda, Maryland, and two of his employees who have also used family leave. The Calvert Group started a family and medical leave program 3 years before it became the law of the land. Like almost 90 percent of the businesses covered by the law, they found that family leave is easy to administer and costs them little or nothing. So we know it's working for both families and businesses. After all, in these past 4 years, American business has created over 11 million new jobs, more than any other 4-year term in our history.

Now we must make it even easier for parents to live up to their responsibilities to their children and to their employers. Today I call upon Congress to expand the family leave law to give parents an additional 24 hours of unpaid leave each year to take a child or an elderly relative to a regular doctor's appointment or to attend parent-teacher conferences at school. In so doing, we'll make our families stronger and our workers more productive, building the kind of country and economy we all want for our children.

We also must address the fact that too many workers still do not know about the family leave law. That's why I'm pleased to announce that we're launching a multimedia public education campaign to spread the word about family leave to make sure employers and employees have the facts and to make sure everyone knows how to make this law work for them. It's simply not enough to help people have the tools to succeed; we also have to make sure they know what those tools are.

The centerpiece of this campaign is a new 800 number that any American can call to learn about family and medical leave. It's 1-800-959-FMLA. That's 1-800-959-FMLA. You can also get information through our Labor Department's website on the Internet: www.dol.gov. That's www.dol.gov.

By expanding family leave to cover children's doctor visits and parent-teacher conferences and by helping more Americans to learn about the opportunity of family leave, we can enable millions of more of our fellow citizens to meet their responsibilities both at home and at work. That's how we must prepare our people for a new century full of new promise and possibility.

As parents, teachers, and business people, as members of the work force and members of our communities, we all share a stake in the strength of our families. Our society can never be stronger than the children we raise or the families in which we raise them. That's why family leave is more than just a single issue or accomplishment. It is at the heart of our approach to preparing America for the 21st century by ensuring that we can all meet our obligations and make the most of our God-given gifts.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Death of Herb Caen

February 1, 1997

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Herb Caen, the San Francisco Chronicle's legendary columnist, and we extend our

condolences to his family, friends, and most of all, the city he loved. Maybe it's not right to call an "institution" someone who deflated many