

face of the Earth. And I'm the man with that honor.

Thank you for coming, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. in the Regency Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency

Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Hope Taft, wife of Governor Taft; Robert T. Bennett, chairman, Ohio Republican Party; and Tim Timken, finance chairman, Taft-Bradley Campaign. Mike Turner is a candidate for Congress in Ohio's Third Congressional District.

Statement on the End of the Standoff at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem *May 10, 2002*

I am pleased by the nonviolent end to the standoff at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Like the resolution to the situation in Ramallah, the positive result in Bethlehem was achieved through the efforts of a number of individuals and governments. In particular, I appreciate the efforts of personnel at our Embassy in Tel Aviv and our Consulate General in Jerusalem, which were critical to the outcome, and the work of the European Union.

The end of the standoff in Bethlehem is a positive development that removes an obstacle to restoring security cooperation between the parties and should advance the prospects for resuming a political process toward peace. As I said on April 4th, this can only happen if all parties assume their responsibilities for fighting terror and promoting peace.

The President's Radio Address *May 11, 2002*

Good morning. Next week the United States House of Representatives is scheduled to debate a welfare reform plan that will touch the lives of millions of Americans. The last time Congress reformed welfare, in 1996, it put millions of Americans on the path to better lives.

Because of work requirements and time-limited benefits, welfare caseloads have dropped by more than half. Today, 5.4 million fewer people live in poverty, including 2.8 million fewer children than in 1996. Yet, the real success of welfare reform is not found in the number of caseloads that have been cut but in the number of lives that have been changed.

I've traveled all across our Nation, and I've met people whose lives have been improved because of welfare reform. I have heard inspiring stories of hope and dignity and hard work and personal achievement. Yet, there are still millions of Americans trapped in dependence, without jobs and the dignity they bring. And now Congress must take the next necessary steps in welfare reform.

Compassionate welfare reform should encourage strong families. Strong marriages and stable families are good for children, so stable families should be a central aim of welfare policy. Under my plan, up to \$300 million per year will be available to

States to support good private and public programs that counsel willing couples on building a healthy respect for marriage.

Compassionate welfare reform must allow States greater flexibility in spending welfare money. Today, confusing and conflicting regulations are keeping people from getting help. My proposal would give States the freedom to redesign how Federal programs operate in their States. This will allow States to be more innovative in providing better job training, housing, and nutrition programs, and better childcare services to low-income families.

Most of all, compassionate welfare reform must encourage more and more Americans to find the independence of a job. Today, States on average must require work of only 5 percent of adults getting welfare. I am proposing that every State be required within 5 years to have 70 percent of welfare recipients working or being trained to work at at least 40 hours a week. These work requirements must be applied carefully and compassionately.

Because many on welfare need new skills, my plan allows States to combine work with up to 2 days each week of education and job training. Our proposal allows for 3 months in full-time drug rehabilitation or job training, and adolescent mothers can meet their work requirements by attending high school. A work requirement is not a penalty; it is the pathway to independence and self-respect. For former welfare recipients, this path has led to a new and better life.

When I was in North Carolina earlier this year, I met Ella Currence, a mother

of four who was on welfare for 7 years. She knew change would be difficult, but she also knew change was best. Ella began participating in the State's Work First Program. She has been working for the last 5 years, and she put her life in order. Ella says, "You can do anything you want to do if you put your mind to it." This is the spirit and confidence encouraged by work.

Everyone in America benefits from compassionate welfare reform. Former welfare recipients gain new hope and know the independence and dignity of an honest day's work. As our recovery continues, business will need more motivated and trained workers. Good welfare reform laws can break dependency and help the American economy.

My administration has worked closely with Congress in writing the new welfare legislation. It's an excellent bill that will provide hope and promise, dignity and opportunity to millions of Americans. I urge the House to pass it and the Senate to then act on it.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:10 a.m. on May 9 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 10 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks on Signing the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 May 13, 2002

The President. Good morning, and welcome to Washington's grand old building, the Eisenhower Executive Office Build-

ing—or as we now call it, the Ike. [*Laughter*]