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Week Ending Friday, April 23, 1993

Radio Address on Administration Goals

April 17, 1993

Good morning. My voice is coming to you this morning through the facilities of the oldest radio station in America, KDKA in Pittsburgh. I'm visiting the city to meet personally with citizens here to discuss my plans for jobs, health care, and the economy. But I wanted first to do my weekly broadcast with the American people.

I'm told this station first broadcast in 1920 when it reported that year's Presidential elections. Over the past seven decades Presidents have found ways to keep in touch with the people, from whistle-stop tours to fireside chats to the bus tour that I adopted, along with Vice President Gore, in last year's campaign.

Every Saturday morning I take this time to talk with you, my fellow Americans, about the problems on your minds and what I'm doing to try and solve them. It's my way of reporting to you and of giving you a way to hold me accountable. You sent me to Washington to get our Government and economy moving after years of paralysis in policy and a bad experiment with trickle-down economics. You know how important it is for us to make bold, comprehensive changes in the way we do business.

We live in a competitive global economy. Nations rise and fall on the skills of their workers, the competitiveness of their companies, the imagination of their industries, and the cooperative experience and spirit that exists between business, labor, and government. Although many of the economies of the industrialized world are now suffering from slow growth, they've made many of the smart investments and the tough choices which our Government has for too long ignored. That's why many of them have been moving ahead and too many of our people have been falling behind.

We have an economy today that even when it grows is not producing new jobs. We've increased the debt of our Nation by 4 times over the last 12 years, and we don't have much to show for it. We know that wages of most working people have stopped rising, that most people are working longer work weeks, and that too many families can no longer afford the escalating cost of health care.

But we also know that, given the right tools, the right incentives, and the right encouragement, our workers and businesses can make the kinds of products and profits our economy needs to expand opportunity and to make our communities better places to live.

In many critical products today Americans are the low cost, high quality producers. Our task is to make sure that we create more of those kinds of jobs.

Just 2 months ago I gave Congress my plan for long-term jobs and economic growth. It changes the old priorities in Washington and puts our emphasis where it needs to be: on people's real needs, on increasing investments and jobs and education, on cutting the Federal deficit, on stopping the waste which pays no dividends, and redirecting our precious resources toward investment that creates jobs now and lays the groundwork for robust economic growth in the future.

These new directions passed the Congress in record time and created a new sense of hope and opportunity in our country. Then the jobs plan I presented to Congress, which would create hundreds of thousands of jobs, most of them in the private sector in 1993 and 1994, passed the House of Representatives. It now has the support of a majority of the United States Senate. But it's been held up by a filibuster of a minority in the Senate, just 43 Senators. They blocked a vote that they know would result in the passage of our bill and the creation of jobs.

The issue isn't politics. The issue is people. Millions of Americans are waiting for this legislation and counting on it, counting on us in Washington. But the jobs bill has been grounded by gridlock.

I know the American people are tired of business as usual and politics as usual. I know they don't want us to spin our wheels. They want the recovery to get moving. So I have taken a first step to break this gridlock and gone the extra mile. Yesterday I offered to cut the size of this plan by 25 percent, from $16 billion to $12 billion.

It's not what I'd hoped for. With 16 million Americans looking for full-time work, I simply can't let the bill languish when I know that even a compromise bill will mean hundreds of thousands of jobs for our people. The mandate is to act to achieve change and move the country forward. By taking this initiative in the face of an unrelenting Senate talkathon, I think we can respond to your mandate and achieve a significant portion of our original goals.

First, we want to keep the programs as much as possible that are needed to generate jobs and meet human needs, including highway and road construction, summer jobs for young people, immunization for children, construction of waste water sites, and aid to small businesses. We also want to keep funding for extended unemployment compensation benefits for people who have been unemployed for a long time because the economy isn't creating jobs.

Second, I've recommended that all the other programs in the bill be cut across-the-board by a little more than 40 percent.

And third, I've recommended a new element in this program to help us immediately start our attempt to fight against crime by providing $200 million for cities and towns to rehire police officers who lost their jobs during the recession and put them back to work protecting our people. I'm also going to fight for a tough crime bill because the people of this country need it and deserve it.

Now the people who are filibustering this bill, the Republican Senators, say they won't vote for it because it increases deficit spending, because there's extra spending this year that hasn't already been approved. That sounds reasonable, doesn't it? Here's what they don't say. This program is more than paid for by budget cuts over my 5-year budget, and this program is well within the spending limits already approved by the Congress this year.

It's amazing to me that many of these same Senators who are filibustering the bill voted during the previous administration for billions of dollars of the same kind of emergency spending, and much of it was not designed to put the American people to work.

This is not about deficit spending. We have offered a plan to cut the deficit. This is about where your priorities are, on people or on politics.

Keep in mind that our jobs bill is paid for dollar-for-dollar. It is paid for by budget cuts. And it's the soundest investment we can now make for ourselves and our children. I urge all Americans to take another look at this jobs and investment program, to consider again the benefits for all of us when we've helped make more American partners working to ensure the future of our Nation and the strength of our economy.

You know, if every American who wanted a job had one, we wouldn't have a lot of the other problems we have in this country today. This bill is not a miracle; it's a modest first step to try to set off a job creation explosion in this country again. But it's a step we ought to take. And it is fully paid for over the life of our budget.

Tell your lawmakers what you think. Tell them how important the bill is. If it passes, we'll all be winners.

Good morning, and thank you for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. in the USAir terminal at Pittsburgh International Airport.

Interview With Mike Whitely of KDKA Radio in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

April 17, 1993

Mr. Whitely. For everyone listening on KDKA Radio, I'm Mike Whitely, KDKA Radio News. We're here at the Pittsburgh International Airport and with me is the President of the United States Bill Clinton.

And I'd like to welcome you to the area and to KDKA.

The President. Thank you, Mike. Glad to be here.

Los Angeles Verdict

Mr. Whitely. There are a lot of things we'd like to talk about in the brief amount of time we have, but some news is just breaking from Los Angeles. I guess the entire country has been kind of holding their breath, wondering what's going to happen in the trial of the four Los Angeles police officers. We just heard that two of those officers, the sergeant, Sergeant Koon and Officer Powell have been found guilty, and two officers have been found not guilty.

It's a situation that's been building for over a year since the first trial and now this trial and this verdict. And I wonder what your thoughts are this morning on how you see the situation in Los Angeles in connection with your administration and what you're trying to do.

The President. Well, first of all, I think the American people should know that this trial, in my judgment, is a tribute to the work and judgment of the jury, as well as to the efforts of the Federal Government in developing the case.

The law under which the officers were tried is a complex one; the standards of proof are complicated. The jury decided that they would convict the sergeant who was responsible for supervising the officers and the officer who on the film did most of the beating. The jury acquitted an officer who kicked Rodney King, but also plainly tried to shield him from some blows, and another officer who was a rookie.

No one knows exactly why they did what they did, but it appears that they really tried to do justice here. They acknowledged that his civil rights were violated. And I think that the American people should take a lot of pride in that. But I hope now we can begin to look ahead and focus on three things: first of all, the importance of trying to bring this country together and not violate the civil rights of any American; secondly, the importance of renewing our fight against crime.

I think it's important to recognize that in the poorest areas of Los Angeles and many other cities in this country, people may be worried about police abuse, but they're even more worried about crime. It's time that we renewed our efforts to go to community policing: put 100,000 more police officers on the street, pass the Brady bill that would require a waiting period before people could buy a handgun, and do some other things to reduce the vulnerability of our people to violence and drugs.

And the last point I'd like to make is it seems to me that we have got to rededicate ourselves to the economic revitalization of our cities and other economically distressed areas. If you just think about it, if everybody in Los Angeles who wanted a job had one, I don't think we'd have quite as many problems as we do.

I laid out a very ambitious program in the campaign to try to bring private investment and public investment to bear in our cities. I have dispatched the Commerce Secretary, Ron Brown, to California to try to come up with some strategies for that State, because it's our biggest State with our highest unemployment rate, which could then be applied around the country. I want to talk to him and to the Attorney General, to the new head of the NAACP, to Reverend Jackson, and to several other people, and then I'll decide where to go from here with regard to Los Angeles and the other cities of the country.

Stimulus Package

Mr. Whitely. Let's talk about what brings you to the Pittsburgh area today. I guess there's been a lot of discussion on Capitol Hill about your stimulus package. You've been locked in a battle with the GOP. Yesterday, as you said earlier in your radio address, you made some moves to break that gridlock. What brings you to Pittsburgh, in particular