

Week Ending Friday, December 3, 1993

The President's Radio Address

November 27, 1993

Good morning. This week my family celebrated Thanksgiving as most American families did. We gathered around a table filled with the bounty of our great country, and we thanked the Lord for all we have and all we can hope for.

No holiday tradition is more American than Thanksgiving. Indeed, no people have better reasons to give thanks, because no people have been more blessed. This holiday also signals the beginning of the end of the year, a time that many of us will use to take stock and to reflect. By any measure this has been an eventful year for our Nation.

On the road and in letters from my fellow Americans, I've been touched and buoyed by the words of support for the changes we have put in place and the progress we've made. It's been a good beginning: Inflation is down; interest rates are down to historic lows; the deficit is down; investment is up. Many of you listening today are among the millions of Americans who've refinanced your homes or your businesses in just the last year because of the drop in interest rates. And in the last 10 months, the economy has produced more private sector jobs than in the previous 4 years. And now that Congress has approved the North American Free Trade Agreement and I have gone to Seattle to meet with the leaders of all the Asian-Pacific economies, I know we can stimulate our jobs machine even more with increased exports.

There's so much else that we've been able to do to help our workers and our families. Congress also passed and I signed into law the family and medical leave law. Now workers have a right to take some time off to take care of a sick family member or newborn child without losing their jobs. It will help to make America a place where you can be a successful worker and a successful parent.

We've also moved to help our students by reforming the college loan law so that loans are easier to get, with lower interest rates and better repayment terms and stiffer requirements to pay the loan back.

We signed into law the National Service Act, which 3 years from now will allow 100,000 young Americans to earn some money against their college education while rebuilding their communities from the grass-roots up.

We won passage of our reforms in each House in campaign finance. And when the Congress comes back, if the House and Senate can agree, we can do a lot more to take special interest politics out of our congressional elections and therefore our decision-making process.

We passed an economic program, which will give a real tax break to working families with children to try to make sure that everybody who works 40 hours a week in this country with a child in the home will be lifted well above the poverty line. But there's still a lot to do.

Under the leadership of the First Lady, we've now got a health security proposal. And it's my fond hope that before the end of next year, Congress will pass a plan that will give every American comprehensive health care that can never be taken away.

The crime bill has been passed in both Houses. It will put more police officers on the street, up to 100,000 of them, build more prisons, establish boot camps for young first-time offenders, it will ban assault weapons. But we have to resolve those two differences and pass that crime bill early next year.

We're making progress in the fight against crime. Just before the Congress left, it adopted legislation requiring a 5-day waiting period before anyone can purchase a handgun, so there can be a check for someone's age, mental health history, and criminal record. This action was a national victory in the fight against crime and violence and a very per-

sonal victory for Jim and Sarah Brady, a family touched by violence who turned tragedy into triumph by fighting for 7 long years to pass this important legislation to protect the rest of us from individuals who shouldn't be permitted to possess or use handguns. We've waited a long time to pass the Brady bill, but it's just the latest example of how we brought to Washington the change we promised in the last campaign.

In 10 months we've broken the gridlock. We've won much of what I set out to do in my first year. Much of the change that I talked about when I ran for President is beginning to be accomplished now. The fact is, according to the highly respected Congressional Quarterly, this administration, working with both parties, has had more of its major legislation adopted in this first year than any other administration in the last 40 years.

Every one of these changes, every step we take, has to be measured in a job that a mother or father finds or an opportunity a child gains or in better prospects for a business owner or in safer streets and a more secure future. Every step forward, if it helps to invigorate our economy, our community, our families, is a step worth taking. But ultimately these steps will be steady only if we begin together to do more to fix America from the inside out.

We have to be concerned with the number of families that have totally broken down, the number of young women giving birth to children out of wedlock. It's sweeping the country upward and offward—upward and all across racial lines. We have to be concerned that without the structure, the discipline, the love of families, too many children face a future stripped of hope. Too many kids now live without enough hope or enough love or enough discipline.

We have to be concerned that in both our cities and our rural areas, the value of life has been cheapened. Too many children are killing children with weapons of destruction that are even more efficient and sophisticated than the police, who are supposed to protect the people, have.

For our part, we're working hard to provide economic security, health care security, and safety in community and in this way to

remove some of the stress that hurts our families. We're working hard to open opportunities to make the changes sweeping the world friendly to the American working family. It's been said that the family is the test of freedom. It tests our freedom and our sense of responsibility. And that's the best reason to try to preserve families and to try to alleviate some of the terrible, terrible burdens that have aggravated the strains on family life for nearly 30 years now.

So, my fellow Americans, on this most treasured of holiday weekends, as we give thanks for what we have, let's remember what so many millions of Americans don't have. Let's remember how much both work and family mean to civilized life. We can restore and repair the basic fabric of our society only if we build up both: work and family. Together, I believe we can do that.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:15 p.m. on November 24 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 27.

Proclamation 6630—National Hospice Month, 1993 and 1994

November 29, 1993

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As Americans work together to reform our Nation's health care system, I am pleased to proclaim November 1993 and 1994 as National Hospice Month.

Hospice is an eminently successful program, a vital health care service that allows the terminally ill to die with dignity. It addresses the importance of being in a warm, familiar, and comforting environment in our last days. This care helps not only in preserving and enhancing the patient's quality of life during an illness, but also in giving support to the family following the death of a loved one. This attention underscores the importance of the needs of the entire family and highlights the dedication of this supportive and knowledgeable interdisciplinary team.