

their own choice. So that if people, because of where they happen to live, have much better access to some other health care provider, they will be, at their own choice, they will be able to choose to use those facilities. But we feel that the United States has a solemn obligation to maintain the Indian Health Service. And as you probably know, the funding has dropped over years as the number of people using it has dropped. So one of the things that—after the leaders of tribes from all over America came to see us in Washington about this.

One of the things we did was to go back and amend the plan to try to strengthen the financial support for the health care service so they would be able to provide particularly the kind of services to people who are outpatients like your son was. So I think in this case, we will give the American Indians more personal choice than many now have. You won't be forced to the health care service. You'll have the option of using something else. But if you do use it, it should be better funded than it now is.

[At this point, Dr. Firestone expressed his concern that benefits for children with multiple disabilities and chronic illnesses might be reduced and presented the President with a letter regarding their needs. He then thanked the President for visiting the clinic.]

The President. I can't answer the question you just asked me. But I'll get an answer, and I'll get back to this lady who wrote you the letter—or to me—the letter. I'll do it.

Let me just say before we close, and then I want to say hello to all of you and then go back around and see the kids who have been waiting so patiently, if they're still there. I don't know if they are. I hear some people chanting in the background.

When the new year comes and the Congress comes back into session, there will be a few months of really intense debate on this. Just think about this town and the size of this town and the diversity of the things we've heard about already today, as well as all the things we haven't heard about. This is a very complicated matter. But in the end it comes down to something very simple. We are spending a much bigger percentage of our income on health care than any other country

in the world, and yet we are the only major country who doesn't provide everybody health care coverage that is always there, that can never be taken away.

And we have permitted a system to develop so that now, coming out of medical school, only about one in seven doctors are committed to do what this doctor has done and this doctor wishes to do. So we have to change that. And it is perfectly clear that it will not happen unless the Congress is prepared to go through the incredibly rigorous process of reviewing the bill that I presented, listening to anybody else's alternatives and hearing the human voices that we have heard today, and coming to grips with this problem and actually acting on it.

This is something we should have done a generation ago when we could have saved untold billions of dollars and no telling how many lives. But we can do it now, and we have to do it. And I would just implore you to work with us, make sure we don't make any mistakes we can possibly avoid, but give the Members of Congress from your State the courage to face this problem that our Nation has neglected for too long.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:04 p.m. at the El Pueblo Health Services Clinic. In his remarks, he referred to clinic physician Dr. Alan Firestone. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Appointment for Regional Administrators at the Environmental Protection Agency

December 3, 1993

The President today approved John H. Hankinson, Jr., as Regional Administrator, Region IV, and Jane N. Saginaw as Regional Administrator, Region VI, at the Environmental Protection Agency.

"I am pleased today to name these two hard-working individuals to our team at EPA," the President said.

NOTE: Biographies of the appointees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary. This

item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Nomination for Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

December 3, 1993

The President today announced his intention to nominate Ricardo Martinez, M.D., to be Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration with the U.S. Department of Transportation.

"Ricardo Martinez has dedicated his career to improving trauma care and curtailing car accident deaths," the President said. "As a firsthand witness to the tragedy accidents can inflict on individuals, families, and communities, he will work hard to ensure the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration uses all of its resources to make our roads safer."

NOTE: A biography of the nominee was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at the "Celebration '94" Reception in Albuquerque, New Mexico

December 3, 1993

The President. You know, when Bruce said to Alice, "Just give the President whatever it is you have," I said, "Heck, Bruce, I want the ranch." [Laughter] I like the Stetson, but I mean, if I really get a choice—[Laughter]

Ladies and gentlemen, I am glad to be here. Glad to be back in New Mexico. How many of you were here—I just got off the phone with Hillary. She was working in New Hampshire yesterday, so she's home tonight. I just got off the phone with her. How many of you were here when we were here the night of the election—all night—remember that? The press has a way of finding out everything about you if you become President. President Reagan loved jelly beans, and President Bush didn't like broccoli and last week the Wall Street Journal reported our

dark secret that Hillary and I are addicted to salsa. [Laughter] And it all happened because of you, because we stayed up all night living on that before the election.

I am so glad to be back in New Mexico. I'm glad to be here with Ray Powell and with you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for being such a good emcee. I want to thank my longtime friend Bruce King. I don't know if you remember what he said. There are only three living Americans who served as Governors in the seventies, the eighties, and the nineties: Cecil Andrus of Idaho, Bruce King, and me. It was the longest time before any of us could get a promotion. We had a lottery, and in the beginning we thought I won, but sometimes in the last year I wasn't sure I didn't lose. [Laughter] I love Bruce King. The first time I ever met Bruce and Alice and Bruce laid all that, you know, that "Aw, shucks," stuff on me—[laughter]—"Aw, shucks," you know, I checked three times to make sure I still had my billfold in my pocket. Aw, shucks. [Laughter] I appreciate the fact that Bruce is missing the start of the annual Lobo Classic Basketball Tournament tonight. I know what a sacrifice it is. He did it for the money, not me. [Laughter] But I'm glad he's here anyway. You can tell we're friends; you can't make fun of your enemies. [Laughter]

I want to say, too, how glad I am to be here with Bill and Barbara Richardson. Bill Richardson was the national cochair of the Adelante Con Clinton movement. Thank you for bringing your posters; there's two there. But he never did anything more important for America than in his leadership in the fight for the passage of NAFTA. I can tell you, on September 14th, the day after we had the signing of the peace agreement between Israel and the PLO, we formally kicked off the NAFTA fight after all the side agreements on labor and the environment were done. And we had the endorsement of all the living former Presidents. We had four Presidents and former Presidents there, President Ford, President Carter, President Bush, and myself. We were 100 votes behind. We were maybe that close—[laughter]—100 in the