

Week Ending Friday, September 9, 1994

The President's Radio Address

September 3, 1994

Good morning. For most Americans, this Labor Day weekend is our last chance to catch our breath before the hustle and bustle of the fall. I'm on vacation with my family, and many of you may be driving to the beach or the lake for the last long weekend of summer. Maybe you're planning to do some back-to-school shopping or have a backyard barbecue for your family and friends. Or perhaps you're one of the unsung heroes of Labor Day, the police officers, the health care workers, who have to be on the job this weekend. Whether you're working or relaxing, let's take a few minutes to remember the story of Labor Day and what it says about the promise of American life.

One hundred years ago, America created this national holiday to honor our working men and women. A hundred Labor Days later, its founders would be proud to know that the vast majority of our working people have lifted themselves into the great American middle class. We didn't do it with hand-outs but by working, hard working, smart working.

The American way is to offer opportunity and challenge people to make the most of it. We have a unique partnership between government, business, labor, and individual citizens. It's given us the public school system, the State universities, collective bargaining, the GI bill, to name just a few, all partnerships that have given Americans the tools to build better lives for themselves.

For the past two decades, however, more and more people have had a harder time achieving the American dream. Too many Americans have found themselves working longer and harder for stagnant wages. Crime and terrible social problems have rendered our quality of life more tenuous. Global economic competition and serious, serious prob-

lems at home have really complicated our lives.

The American people have suffered and, too often and in too many ways, the National Government has ignored these problems or even made some of them worse. We have actually managed to quadruple our national debt in the decade of the eighties, while reversing and declining in our commitment to invest in our people and our economic future.

I ran for President because I think our Nation's mission at the close of the 20th century must be to keep the American dream alive in the 21st century. We need a plan for the future that puts our people first, that has a partnership that creates opportunity, insists on more personal responsibility for our people, and enables us to rebuild our communities.

We face tough challenges, and change is always hard. The status quo has always had powerful friends. But the families we honor on Labor Day deserve better.

Last year we began to put into place this strategy for the future, beginning with an effort to renew our economy and put our economic house in order with the biggest budget deficit reduction package in history, including \$255 billion in spending cuts, tax increases for the wealthiest 1.5 percent of Americans, and tax relief for 15 million working families with children to encourage them to keep working and not fall back into welfare.

We pried open new markets around the world for American workers with NAFTA, a worldwide trade agreement, new openings to Japan and the rest of Asia, serious efforts to sell American products, everything from airplanes to apples.

While we cut spending, we actually invested more in the lifelong education and training that our people will need in the global economy, from Head Start to apprenticeships for young people who don't go on to

college to constant job-training opportunities for people once they're in the work force.

The friends of the failed policies of the past—the people who raised taxes on the middle class, lowered them on the wealthy, reduced investment in our people, and exploded our deficit—they predicted this economic strategy would fail. They said it would produce disaster. But instead, in just 19 months, our economy has created more than 4.2 million new jobs, 93 percent of them in the private sector.

Yesterday we got more good news. We reached 2 million new jobs this year, and the year still has 4 months to go. And that total includes 135,000 new manufacturing jobs created this year. For the first time in 10 years, manufacturing jobs have increased for 8 consecutive months.

In addition, 20 million young Americans are already eligible to refinance their college loans at lower interest rates with longer repayment terms. And we're going to have 3 years of deficit reduction for the first time since Harry Truman was President, creating a more stable future for our children.

Restoring opportunity, honoring work and family and community, that's what this administration and our mission are all about. A big part of that is personal security, and all of you saw that as the debate over the crime bill unfolded in the last several weeks. We have reduced the size of the Federal bureaucracy by over 270,000 over the next 6 years and taken all that money to give it back to local communities to make children and families safer, 100,000 more police, more prisons, longer sentences for serious offenders, programs to help young people have something to say yes to, to prevent crimes: drug courts, boot camps, education and job-training programs, jobs and activities for young people, and a ban on juvenile ownership of handguns and on assault weapons. Again, there was bitter opposition. The status quo had powerful friends, but the American people and the American future won.

In everything we do, we must honor work and family and community. That's why we're fighting for health security for working Americans by providing universal coverage and controlling costs, why we're working to reform the welfare system to help people

move from public assistance to productive jobs, and why we're changing the unemployment system to a reemployment system to help people continuously get the training, the counseling, the information they need about new jobs.

Our work won't be done until all Americans enjoy the dignity of work, the security of world-class skills, and the opportunity to build a life for themselves and their children that is better. That can only be done by taking a new direction—not a Government which says we can do it alone and certainly not a Government that sits on the sidelines but one that works in partnership with business and with our individual working men and women and their families.

On Labor Day, Monday, I'll be visiting with workers at a shipyard in Bath, Maine, where that partnership is taking place, where labor and management have made a uniquely American covenant with themselves and with their Government: with themselves, to share the responsibility and rewards for the company's success, and with their Government, to take a little help to move from a defense-based economy to prove that they can compete and win in a global economy that involves far more than defense. Those shipyard workers in Maine exemplify the best in the American spirit, the understanding that when we pull together for the common good we are unstoppable.

This Monday, Labor Day, you'll see that spirit all across our country: Milwaukee, at the Labor Day Parade; and Little Rock, at the Old-Time American Union Picnic; in Michigan, as they have on every Labor Day since 1958, you'll see tens of thousands of people walking the 5 miles across the Mackinac Bridge connecting the State's Upper and Lower Peninsulas.

Next Sunday, in Washington, DC, there will be a special Labor Day Mass at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception to bear witness to the timeless truth that work gives structure and meaning to our lives and is divinely ordained.

Whatever you're doing this weekend, I wish you all the best for yourselves and your families. I thank you for listening and for your dedication to our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Tisbury School on Martha's Vineyard, MA.

Remarks on Labor Day in Bath, Maine

September 5, 1994

Ladies and gentlemen, I know it's raining here today, but you have brought a lot of sunshine into my life by the example you've set and the work you've done. And I want to thank you for coming out in the rain to stand up for the interests of the working families of America on this Labor Day. Thank you for being here.

I thank our great labor leaders Tom Donahue and George Kourpias for being here. I want to thank Buzz Fitzgerald and Stoney Dionne. Tom talked about the iron-works being run by two guys named Buzz and Stoney. It sounded like a television series. [*Laughter*] If you do what I expect you to do here, we may get a television series out of this yet.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to my good friend Joe Brennan for being here and for presenting himself as a candidate for Governor again, to Senator Dutremble and Senator Baldacci for being willing to run for Congress at a time when it's not a very popular place to be, but it's still an important place to be. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Tom Andrews for his leadership in the United States Congress to help us rebuild the shipbuilding industry in America and help turn this economy around.

And of course, most of all I want to thank my good friend George Mitchell. You know, if George had been commissioner of baseball, they'd be back playing again now. And I might say on this Labor Day, there's still time for them to go back to work and finish the best baseball season in 50 years, and I hope they will.

Folks, most of what needs to be said here today has been said. But for a century now people have been gathering on Labor Day to celebrate the dignity of work, its importance to our lives, and to have that last long weekend before school starts again and we all go back to work full-time.

I ran for President because I thought this country was in danger of going in the wrong direction and because I thought that our people had it within them to keep the American dream alive into the 21st century for our children and our grandchildren. And I believed then just as strongly as I believe today that we have to have a plan, a strategy, a vision of what we wish our country to be like and how we're going to get there.

If we're going to keep the American dream of opportunity alive for everybody who's willing to work hard and play by the rules, I believe we must do three things: We have to have an economy that works, we have to empower our people to succeed and win in that economy, and we've got to come together again as a community and work together. We cannot afford in a global economy to be divided again, Government and business and workers fighting each other all the time, people in this country finding ways to get in fights with each other instead of ways to pull together and make this country great again.

And our administration has fought for change against some very, very powerful enemies of change, against people who often don't seem to understand what the stakes are because that's what I want for you and your families and your children.

You heard Senator Mitchell say that we began with an economic strategy to get this terrible deficit down. The debt of this country was quadrupled in 12 years. We are bringing the deficit down for 3 years in a row for the first time since Harry Truman was President. We are doing it by cutting spending, asking the wealthiest 1.5 percent to pay more taxes, and providing tax breaks to 15 million working families that are hovering just above the poverty line because we want them to keep working and raising their children, not going into the welfare system. In the State of Maine alone, almost 61,000 families got a tax cut, and only 3,700 got a tax increase. It was a good deal for Maine. It was a good deal for America. And if it hadn't been for Tom Andrews and George Mitchell, the plan would have failed, because we passed it by the narrowest of margins over the enemies of change.