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I am determined that this will be the year that we finally transform welfare across America. If Congress doesn't act, we still have to continue to act, to make responsibility a way of life and not an option. Today I am taking the steps that I can take as President to advance the central premise of welfare reform, one that is embodied in all the proposed welfare bills: that anyone who can work must do so. We'll say to welfare recipients, ''Within 2 years you will be expected to go to work and earn a paycheck, not draw a welfare check.''

Here is how we will do that. I am directing the Department of Health and Human Services to require everyone who takes part in the jobs program to sign a personal responsibility contract and commit to going to work within 2 years. States can than take away the benefits if they fail to live up to that commitment.

Today 28 States already impose work requirements and time limits, everyone of them under welfare waivers granted by our administration. I believe all 50 States should follow that lead. This action will ensure that that happens even before welfare reform legislation passes. Of course, this will take effect only if Congress fails to enact welfare reform legislation. I far prefer a bill passed by Congress, and I know you do, too. So let's agree: One way or another we will make work and responsibility the law of the land, but we want a good welfare reform bill.

Ten years ago at an NGA meeting in Hilton Head, South Carolina, I heard testimony from a woman from Little Rock, a woman who had moved from welfare to work through our State's work program. She told us, ''The best thing about work is not the check. The best thing is when my boy goes to school and they ask him, what does your mamma do for a living, he can give an answer.''

Well, today, 10 years later, that lady has a job, and she's raised three children. One has a job, and two are in school. By her undying effort and her unbreakable spirit she shows us that we can make a difference, that this cycle of welfare can be broken, that welfare can be a second chance, not a way of life.

So let me say in closing that we can meet all our challenges if we'll work in this way and if we'll follow the example of the NGA: be bipartisan, cooperative, look for results, not abstract rhetoric, not be ashamed to learn from each other and take our best ideas from each other, and putting our values to work. That's how we can reform welfare and meet our other challenges. If we do that, this country will enter the 21st century stronger and more vibrant than ever before, with the American dream alive for all our people.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 11:20 a.m. from Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building to the NGA conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin and Gov. Zell Miller of Georgia.

Remarks to the United States Agricultural Communicators Congress

July 16, 1996

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for that warm welcome. And I was listening to Dan Glickman say all those outrageously positive things, and it reminded me that that was a living example of Clinton's third law of politics, which is, whenever possible, be introduced by someone you've appointed to high position. [*Laughter*]

Steve and I were talking up here; he said, ''You know, the last time I was on a platform with you, you fell through a hole in it.'' And it's really true. It was—what was it—a soybean meeting in Arkansas when I was Governor, and he and I were on the platform together and there was a crack in the platform. My chair fell through it. [*Laughter*] It really did a lot for my confidence right before I got up here to speak that he reminded me of that. [*Laughter*] As far as I know, we're all right.

I'm delighted to be here. I want to begin by thanking all of you for the work that you do every day to keep in touch with people in rural America. I want to thank Secretary Glickman who I believe has done a magnifi-

cent job as Secretary of Agriculture, and I thank him for that.

It is true that both the Vice President and I come out of small towns and have some more than passing acquaintance with agriculture. And one of the most enjoyable days of my Presidency was the National Rural Conference we had in Ames, Iowa, not very long ago, that Secretary Glickman did such a fine job on.

And it is also true that I always believed that we could not bring the American economy back unless we brought rural America back. One of the things that was most disturbing to me about the economic recovery of the 1980's was that it seemed to sweep the coast and leave the heartland behind. And we've worked very, very hard in this administration to fashion an economic policy that would not only make the overall economic numbers look hopeful but would actually benefit every region and every State in our country. And I think that is very, very important.

Even if a small percentage of our people live in rural America, and I'm happy that more and more people are going back there, a lot of what makes America special is alive and well there and is embodied in our farming communities.

I'm glad to see some population movement back, and I'm glad to see family farming once again becoming a career choice for young people. If we are going to meet the challenges of the 21st century, we all have to meet them together and there has to be a role, a vital role for people living in rural America.

When I sought the Presidency, I did it because I was concerned that our country was drifting into the next century instead of charging toward it and that we were coming apart instead of growing together. It seemed to me that there were three straightforward things that we had to do, at least from my point of view, to have the vision of America in the 21st century become real. One is to guarantee opportunity to every American without regard to his or her station in life who is willing to work for it. The second is to receive more responsibility from all of our citizens, taking more initiative for their own lives and their families and their communities. And the third was to see that we come together as a community.

So that—and this is very important—this is the most diverse big country in the world, most racially and ethnically diverse, the most religiously diverse now. And yet we are bound together by a written Constitution that's 220 years old, going back to the Declaration of Independence. The Constitution was ratified a little more than 10 years after that. And those ideas are just as vital today and just as relevant today as they were over 200 years ago. They are the framework which enables us to come together and share this land with people who are very different than we are, as long as we all play by the same rules.

I say that; it seems so simple maybe, but when you look at how the world's being torn apart because of the differences that we take for granted, that we can live with, it's very important to understand how much we have to be grateful for, with our whole history of constitutional government, a government of laws, a Bill of Rights which gives everybody some elbow room and yet requires all of us not to abuse one another.

I mean, look at Bosnia, a tiny country where you'd think the people would want to be pulling together to try to make the most of their very, very ancient heritage. And it took an international effort of Herculean proportions to stop people who were biologically indistinguishable from one another but had different religions and had grown into different ethnic categories.

Look at this heartbreaking development in Northern Ireland where people were getting along. They had the lowest unemployment rate, the highest growth rate they'd had in 15 years. When I went there last year, people lined the streets, the Catholic and the Protestant together, to say. ''We don't want any more war. We love our peace.'' A lot of the younger people could hardly remember what they were fighting about. But just the failure of leadership, by people in a position to abuse their positions, in a moment can drive people back into that kind of division.

So when you think about the spirit of cooperation and hard work and family that pervades rural America, let me tell you that it's something we take for granted, but when you

look at our largest county, Los Angeles County, and you realize we have 150 different racial and ethnic groups in one county, and yet they're still basically getting along reasonably well. Yes, we have problems from time to time there. But if you look at the schools that have people from 70 different linguistic backgrounds in some of our public schools, it's astonishing to see that we've done as well as we have. And it's a great tribute to the endurance of our fundamental values.

And if we're going to keep this whole world together and get these countries to working together to fight our common problems, like terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and diseases that cross national lines, we're going to have to remember these basic values.

And so I wanted to say that at the very outset of my remarks because I think in some ways it's more important than anything else. I'd be perfectly content as somebody from Arkansas to talk about the fact that soybeans are over $8 and I wasn't sure I'd see that again in my lifetime. But I think it's important to note that sometime in our lifetime they will probably be less than $7 again or $6 or—I hope not lower than that. It's liable—but these things endure. And we need to hang on to them.

And as we look ahead and we try to imagine what the world's going to look like 20, 30, 40 years from now for our children and our grandchildren, it's very important to know that America has something that has kept us together and strong for over 200 years, that will take us into this new world.

The other thing I'd like to say is that it's very important that we meet our challenges at home and abroad and that we see them together. I think farmers, in a funny way, because we've exported farm products for so long, may have a little more of a global perspective than a lot of other citizens do. But when people say, well, what's your vision for America in the 21st century, I say I want the American dream alive for everybody; I want us coming together, not drifting apart; and I want us still to be the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity, which means we have to be involved in the world as well as here at home.

I think you understand that instinctively. But I think it's very important that all of our citizens understand that. It requires me from time to time to do things that I know are wildly unpopular. I realize that what I did in Haiti wasn't popular, but I think it's the right thing to do. And we've got a democracy restored there, and we don't have to worry about large numbers of illegal immigrants risking their lives to come from Haiti to the United States.

I think trying to help a new and responsible government in Mexico avoid bankruptcy was the responsible thing to do. It reduced illegal immigration and kept Mexico as a responsible trade partner instead of having it collapse on us. I think we did what we had to do in Bosnia. But the most important thing is I think we also put that into a context of 200 more trade agreements, including a lot of things that specifically affected agriculture.

So, if I could ask you to do something when you go home, I hope that you will take every opportunity to talk to people that you live and work with who don't know anything about farming about how it's very hard in the world we're living in—it will be impossible in the world we're moving to—to have a clear dividing line between our domestic economic affairs and our international economic affairs, that to be an American in the 21st century will mean to be a citizen of the world. Even if you live in a completely landlocked State like Arkansas or Iowa or Missouri, if you're a farmer, you know that instinctively. And all of our people have to embrace that.

Four years ago, I embarked upon an economic strategy that I thought would work. I wanted to cut the deficit, expand trade, and continue to invest in people, in technology, and in research and in infrastructure, the things that would cause our economy to grow. Now, 3½ years later, the results are beginning to come in. I said in 1993 that if Congress adopted our economic plan, I thought we would cut the deficit in half in 4 years and that 8 million jobs would be produced for the American people. Well, in 3½ years, the American people have produced over 10 million jobs, 3.7 million new homeowners, 3 years in a row of record new small

business starts, the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in 27 years.

And we learned today that the deficit, which was $290 billion when I took office, will fall this year to $117 billion. As a percentage of our income, it's the smallest its been since 1974.

And the only debt we have in America today comes from the interest payments we pay on—the only deficit we have comes from the interest payments we have on the 12 years before I became President. In those 12 years we quadrupled the debt. We've now cut the deficit from $290 to $117. We would be running a substantial surplus this year in the Government budget but for the interest payments on that debt.

So this whole thing is turned around. And that's kept interest rates down, and that's permitted this economy to grow. I think it is very important that we keep on until we balance the budget in a responsible way. But it's important that you know that that's a huge drop. There is no other country in the world with an advanced economy where the Government deficit is so small a percentage of its income every year.

So we're moving in the right direction. And it's some evidence, too, I might add, that if we work together, we can continue to make progress.

Let me mention just one other word on the trade issue. I was convinced when I came here that we could not afford to take a protectionist approach but that we had to be more aggressive and open markets to American products and services around the world. We have concluded now over 200 specific trade agreements as well as the big, sweeping agreements like NAFTA and GATT. We've opened foreign markets to American beef and rice and apples and agricultural products. We've got a long way to go, but it's important to point out that our exports, including our agricultural exports, are at all-time highs. Our exports this year will be about $60 billion, and our surplus in agriculture will be $30 billion this year, we believe. And that will, obviously, make it number one among American export industries.

So when you—people talk to you about the trade deficit, remind them that it's—there is no trade deficit in agriculture, there's a huge surplus. And we're going to keep working to open more markets and keep pushing in the right direction there. We've got farm income up and farm asset values up. And the value of assets are growing faster than the debt, which means that the equity positions of farmers are improving.

We've got prices on average that are 20 percent higher than a year ago. I wish I could promise you that we'd have $5 corn and $5.50 wheat and $8 soybeans forever, but I can't do that. But it is encouraging that a lot of farmers are able to finally earn some money, do some improvements that are needed on the farm, save some money for the years that may not be so good, and improve the overall economic position of family farmers throughout this country. I am very encouraged by it. And what we can do in this administration is to continue to work to open those export markets, and we will.

We've also tried to help deal with some serious problems. The most serious one recently, obviously aggravated by the drought, has been the low cattle prices with the high feed prices. We opened a conservation reserve for emergency grazing. We accelerated the purchase of beef by the School Lunch Program. We worked to remove some more export barriers. And the prices are up modestly, about 10 percent. They're still in trouble, but at least there's been some movement in the last few weeks for which I am very grateful.

I also want to thank the Secretary of Agriculture for the work that he and all of us did on the farm bill. To be perfectly candid—and I've said this in public, so there's no point in not saying it again—but I had and still have some reservations about whether this new farm bill is going to work structurally over the long-term as we go through the ups and downs. It looks great right now because we've got high prices. And I hope that the theory of it will work over a period of years.

But I did work in good faith with the leadership of the new Congress to try to pass a farm bill. And I was pleased that we passed some—excuse me—we kept some provisions in this farm bill, especially relating to rural development and to the conservation programs that I thought were quite important. And I was pleased the we were able to pre-

serve them, and I hope we can continue to preserve them in the future.

I'd just like to mention a couple of other issues, if I might. I have been very pleased on balance by the response in the country to the administration's efforts to update meat and poultry inspection. I know this was somewhat controversial. We worked through a lot of difficult issues, but we had to stop using 70 and 80-year-old methods of testing meat when we knew that we had kids out there getting sick, when there were no bad people involved. Nobody was out there trying to be negligent. We just were simply not using the best available technology. And I know it will cause some economic difficulties for some people, but we simply had to do it.

And I never will forget as long as I live dealing with those families of those kids that ate the contaminated meat with the *E. coli* from the Pacific Northwest or the agony that the people felt who sold them the hamburgers. Their pain was also very real, and they felt desperate about it. They never meant to do any such thing. And that was just a case where we'd simply walked away from available technology. So we had to do it. And I hope that you all support the steps we're taking. We've tried to listen as well as we could to everybody. We tried to make the fairest decisions we could. But I think that decision had to be made.

There's one other thing that we're doing that I want to mention that you may know about already, but this week Secretary Glickman is announcing that we're devoting $70 million to several communities in a total of 35 States to help them get safe running water for their people by the year 2000. Interestingly enough, the number one health problem in the developing world is still the absence of clean, safe water. If we could just get clean water to everybody in these poor countries, we could save more children's lives in less time than any other single thing we could do. And yet there are still places in the United States of America in rural areas where people do not have access to safe drinking water. And we are determined to correct that problem. So we will keep working on that as well.

And now there's a lot more to do. And I guess I could keep you here all day, but I'd like to mention one or two things that I think would affect farm families especially. Number one, this Kassebaum-Kennedy health care reform bill would make several million people a year eligible to either get or keep health insurance who can't now by simply saying that people don't automatically lose their health insurance when they change jobs, and their health insurance can't be taken away from them because somebody in their family gets sick. That's why you have insurance in the first place. Now, this is very important for people who are not insured in large units. If you're insured in a large unit, the size of the unit which insures you often protects you from these sorts of problems. But it is terribly important to pass this legislation.

Secondly, in the minimum wage legislation, in the same bill, there are provisions which could be very important to farmers, including an increase in the expensing provision. It was $10,000 when I became President; in '93 we kicked it up to $17,000 or $17,500; this takes it up to $25,000, which is quite important. And secondly, the package of retirement reforms that came out of the White House Conference on Small Business, which would help a lot of farmers is in it. They're making it easier for people to access 401K plans, making it easier for people to move the plans, making it easier for people to maintain them if they hit a rough spot and they can't continue the contributions. There are several other things which strengthen the ability of people who do not work for large employment units to get and keep retirement plans over a lifetime and through the ups and downs that could happen to them.

So these are two things that—there's been almost no—I don't know why exactly, but there's been almost no publicity about the other things that are in that minimum wage bill. But those are two things that are in there.

Now, there are two other provisions that are of interest to you that are not in there but that were part of our discussions when we were talking about how we get a final balanced budget agreement. One was a modification of the estate loss, which has not been changed in a long time, which affects

farmers in particular with high asset values and low cash income and not a lot of money in the bank to pay estate taxes—which we had reached agreement on in our budget negotiations about how to change.

And the other was an increase in the deduction of health care premiums for self-employed people, including farmers, which has been kicked up to about 50 percent. We were going to take it higher, and we reached agreement on that.

So, in the event—I still think there is some chance we will get an agreement in the Congress on a budget bill this year. No one else believes this, but I'm always—but I would remind you, for all of the fights we've had, we have this year passed a very tough antiterrorism bill. We've passed a telecommunications bill that I believe will create hundreds of thousands of high-wage jobs in America within the very near future by getting both the benefits of more competition and the requirement to adequately serve schools and hospitals and places in rural America as well as urban America. All that's in that telecom bill that we passed. We passed lobby reform legislation that I've tried for 3 years to pass; we finally passed that.

So we have done some quite important things in this year in the Congress. And if we pass this minimum wage small business bill that I just mentioned—and we might pass a welfare reform bill because we're getting closer on that—then who knows, we might get lucky and pass the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill, which we're getting close to. Then we might be able to pass this balanced budget bill. It will be a great thing for America if we do it. But if we do it, those other provisions, when we stopped our budget negotiations when the Presidential primary season started, did contain those two things that I know are of great interest in rural America. So anyway, that's kind of where we are with the issues in Washington.

Let me just mention one other thing before I close. It doesn't apply just to rural America; it applies to all Americans. If you look at what's happened in the last 4 years, I think you can make a compelling case that America has gotten its economic house in order, that we've walked away from these permanent big deficits forever. We've reduced the size of the Federal Government; it's about 240,000 people smaller than it was the day I took office. We've abolished a couple hundred Government programs outright. We have taken 16,000 pages of regulation out of the Federal rule books. We tried to improve the quality of Government services and keep interest rates down and let the economy grow.

But there's still a big challenge out there, which is that not everybody is benefiting from this new economy. It's not like it was in the eighties where whole States were left behind. My State didn't have an unemployment rate below the national average until 1992. A lot of rural areas were that way. This is different. In every State, what you see is a division of opportunity based more than anything else on the level of education. And it is a function of the fact that this modern economy is being driven by information and technology and rewards people who not only know a lot but can absorb a lot of new things and learn new things and are very flexible.

So we have got to take a hard look at what it's going to take to get America growing together again. We can change the job mix, as we are, but that takes some time. For example, two-thirds of the new jobs that have been created in America since January of '93 have been in higher wage occupations. And more trade has a lot to do with that because it tends to create higher wage jobs. And that's good, but that's only a small percentage of the total jobs Americans hold.

And if you look at it, what we still have in America is, we have some people who are downsized and have a hard time getting themselves repositioned. We have some people who never feel the recovery because they're in isolated rural areas or isolated inner-city areas. And the largest group of people that are still having a tough time are people that just can't ever get a raise because they have to work harder for less in a competitive economy with low skill levels.

So the best thing we can do—there are lots of things we can do, but the best thing we can do is to raise the level of education and training of every American, including making more educational opportunities available to adult Americans right now. And I have three proposals there that I just want

to mention in closing that I think are very important.

First of all, I proposed a ''GI bill'' for American workers. There are 70 different Government programs for training people who are unemployed or underemployed, and I would give $5 to everybody in this audience that could name more than 5 of them. How about 4? [*Laughter*] There are 70 of them.

So what I propose to do is to take the 70 programs and get rid of all of them, put the money in the bank and give a skill grant to every adult in America who is unemployed or underemployed to take to the local community college or some other institution of your choice. But nearly every American is within driving distance of a community college, and nearly every community college has almost 100 percent placement for people who get educated there into jobs in their community.

We do not need yesterday's splitup training system. We ought to just give people a skill grant and say, you've got enough sense to figure out where to get the training; go get it. So, that's the first proposal.

The second proposal is to make college education more affordable by letting people deduct up to $10,000 of the cost of tuition for the cost of all post-high school education.

The third proposal, building on that, is to make at least 2 years of college after high school just as universal as high school is today. If you look at the last census, you will see how people's incomes start to split apart based on whether they stopped at high school or whether they got at least 2 years more. People that have at least a community college diploma tend to have jobs which are stable, which pay decent incomes, and where they can get a raise over time. People that don't, depending on where they live and what they do—obviously they're exceptions to this, but the odds are that you're likely to have a job where you can't get a raise, and therefore, you lose ground over time.

So my objective will be to make 2 more years of education just as universal as a high school education is today. So what I propose to do there is to give families who choose this instead of the tax deduction a credit, a credit of $1,500 for the first year of a community college and a credit of $1,500 for the second year for everybody that keeps a B average in the first year. That would literally open community college to virtually everyone in America. That $1,500 or less is the tuition cost for community colleges in almost every State. There's a few where they're a little bit higher, but still, the $1,500 credit would have a bit impact.

And if we can do those things, then we can work with the private sector to try to raise the skill levels of the adults that are already out there and get the young people that are coming out of high school into college and at least to 2 more years of education so their prospects will be better. That will enable the American economy to grow but also to grow together. And that's what keeps the American dream alive, the idea that if you're working hard and you're doing your part, you've got your chance at the brass ring. And that's what I believe we need to really focus on now.

And I might say in closing that every advanced country is dealing with this challenge. The United States has done a much better job than most of our competitors in creating new jobs. But no country has solved the increasing inequality problem. And it is clearly related to the breathtaking degree to which change has overtaken the world and rewarded education, knowledge, and skills.

So anything you can do to make this a nonpolitical, nonpartisan issue, the idea that we're going to lift up opportunities for all of our people, I think would very much advance the United States as well as, obviously, life in rural America.

Well, I've talked a little more than I meant to, but I had a lot of things I wanted to talk about. Besides that, I don't see you very often, and I might fall through a crack on the way off the stand. [*Laughter*]

Thank you very much. It's good to be with you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:32 p.m. at the J.W. Marriott Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Drake, president, Agricultural Relations Council.

Statement on Action on Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1995

July 16, 1996

From the outset of my administration, I have been committed to a bipartisan policy that promotes a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba. Consistent with the Cuban Democracy Act and with the efforts of my predecessors, I have maintained a tough economic embargo on the Cuban regime while supporting the Cuban people in their struggle for freedom and prosperity. Often, the United States has stood alone in that struggle, because our allies and friends believed that pressuring Cuba to change was the wrong way to go.

Five months ago, the world was given a harsh lesson about why we need more pressure on Cuba. In broad daylight, and without justification, Cuban military jets shot down two unarmed American civilian aircraft over international waters, taking the lives of four American citizens and residents. I took immediate steps to demonstrate my determination to foster change in Cuba, including the signing into law of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act, which strengthens the embargo, advances the cause of freedom in Cuba, and protects the interests of American citizens whose property was expropriated by the Cuban regime. And I called on the international community to condemn Cuba's actions.

Now the time has come for our allies and friends to do more—to join us in taking concrete steps to promote democracy in Cuba. That is why today, I am announcing a course of action on Title III of the LIBERTAD Act to encourage our allies to work with us and accelerate change in Cuba.

Title III allows U.S. nationals to sue foreign companies that profit from American-owned property confiscated by the Cuban regime. The law also provides me with the authority to suspend the date on which Title III enters into force, or the date on which U.S. nationals can bring suit, if I determine that suspension is necessary to the national interest and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba. I have decided to use the authority provided by Congress to maximize Title III's effectiveness in encouraging our allies to work with us to promote democracy in Cuba.

I will allow Title III to come into force. As a result, all companies doing business in Cuba are hereby on notice that by trafficking in expropriated American property, they face the prospect of lawsuits and significant liability in the United States. This will serve as a deterrent to such trafficking, one of the central goals of the LIBERTAD Act.

At the same time, I am suspending the right to file suit for 6 months. During that period, my administration will work to build support from the international community on a series of steps to promote democracy in Cuba. These steps include: increasing pressure on the regime to open up politically and economically, supporting forces for change on the island, withholding foreign assistance to Cuba, and promoting business practices that will help bring democracy to the Cuban workplace.

At the end of that period, I will determine whether to end the suspension, in whole or in part, based upon whether others have joined us in promoting democracy in Cuba. Our allies and friends will have a strong incentive to make real progress because, with Title III in effect, liability will be established irreversibly during the suspension period and suits could be brought immediately when the suspension is lifted. And for that very same reason, foreign companies will have a strong incentive to immediately cease trafficking in expropriated property, the only sure way to avoid future lawsuits.

Our allies and foreign business partners know from our actions over the past 4 months that my administration is determined to vigorously implement the LIBERTAD Act. For example, Title IV of the act bars from the United States individuals who profit from property confiscated from American citizens. My administration has already begun to notify several foreign nationals that they could no longer enter the United States. Rather than face this prospect, a significant number of foreign companies already has chosen to leave Cuba, thereby reducing the flow of resources the regime uses to maintain its grip on power.