

New York, California, Florida, and Oklahoma. Many of the elected officials from the States led by Senators Graham and Hutchison and Representative Martin Frost and Governor Chiles have made clear to my administration that a strike would severely affect their economies.

American transports almost 10 percent of the Nation's air cargo. A strike could increase and cause delays for shippers and the U.S. Postal Service.

I was also particularly concerned that a strike would be especially disruptive over a holiday weekend, when hundreds of thousands of citizens rely on our air transit system.

This dispute needs to be resolved as soon as possible. I urge the parties to continue to use the National Mediation Board and the Presidential emergency board to redouble their efforts to reach an agreement. They owe that to each other and to the traveling public.

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

The President's Radio Address

February 15, 1997

Good morning. Today I'm pleased to announce a major new step in our efforts to protect America's children, a universal system for attaching child safety seats in cars. This system, developed by a blue ribbon commission of industry and consumer groups, will make safety seats easier to install and more secure on the road. It will save young lives.

In my State of the Union Address, I issued a call to action to all Americans to prepare our people for the 21st century. Building strong families is central to that mission. That's why we must do all that we can to help parents do all they can to live up to one of the greatest responsibilities anyone can have, to care for a child.

Parents are always on the lookout to make sure their children are safe. That's especially true when you get in the car. Thousands of children are killed in car accidents every year; tens of thousands more are injured.

Even though America's cars and roads are the safest in the world, we must make them safer. That's why today, the final day of National Child Passenger Safety Week, I'd like to talk with you about the steps we're taking to save more lives on the road.

First, we will continue to stress the fundamental rules of safety: seatbelts, safety seats for small children, children 12 and under buckled up and in the back seat. Last month, I instructed the outgoing Transportation Secretary, Federico Peña, to develop a plan to get more Americans to wear seatbelts. I'm delighted to be joined today by our new Transportation Secretary, Rodney Slater, who came to us from the Federal Highway Administration. He knows a lot about this issue, and he will present that plan to me in March. When he does, I will be ready to review it and act on it.

We must also continue to support law enforcement in its effort to increase compliance with safety laws.

Second, we have taken action to make it clear that on America's roads there is no room for alcohol or drugs. We fought to make it illegal for all young people under 21 to drive with any alcohol in their blood, and 34 States now have these zero-tolerance laws. We're also developing a plan to make teens pass a drug test as a condition of getting a driver's license.

Third, we've worked to make air bags, one of our most important safety tools, safer for children. All cars and safety seats now come with warning labels to remind drivers to keep children in the back seat. Plans are underway to permit manufacturers to install less powerful air bags and to phase in a new generation of "smart" air bags. Air bags have saved a lot of lives. With these improvements, they'll save even more.

And today we're taking a fourth step: We will make child safety seats safer. These seats are the most effective safety device to protect very young children. In car crashes, they reduce the risk of death or serious injury to infants by 70 percent. They cut the fatality and injury rate for children aged 1 to 4 in half. But while all 50 States have car seat laws, studies show that 40 percent of the time young children do not even ride in safety seats, and even when they are placed in child

safety seats, 80 percent of the time children are either not fully secured or the car seats are not properly attached.

The fact is, despite parents' best efforts, car seats are hard to install. Not all 100 models of car seats fit in all 900 models of passenger cars. And even when they do, it's no simple task to put them in place. Seat belts are not designed primarily to hold child safety seats. Anyone who's wrestled with a car seat knows what I'm talking about. Thousands of frustrated parents have called our Transportation Department hotline with questions about how to use car seats properly.

Parents are not alone in their concerns. Automobile and car seat makers, consumer organizations, the medical community all have felt there was too much confusion surrounding child seat safety. In response to this problem, my administration convened a blue ribbon panel, with representatives from all these groups, to find ways to make it easier for parents to protect their children with safe, secure car seats.

Today I am pleased that we are acting on the panel's number one proposal, a universal system for attaching car safety seats. Under a Transportation Department plan, every car safety seat would have two standard buckles at its base. Every car would be equipped with standard latches in the back seat designed specifically to fasten to these buckles. There would also be universal attachments to secure the top of the safety seat to the car's interior, so car seats would be locked in from top to bottom. This plan will go out for public comment next week. If approved, the new safety system could be on the market by 1999.

A car seat can protect a child from the violence of the worst crashes. So today we are acting to solve a problem that's been around for too long. We're taking steps to make sure that your child's car seat will stay put in your car every time. With this plan, we're moving closer to the day when safe, well-attached car seats will be the rule of the road.

Together, these efforts represent a new spirit of cooperation in America, with industry and Government working with the American people to support our families as they

seek to make life safer and better for our children.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:09 p.m. on February 14 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 15.

Statement on the Telecommunications Services Agreement February 15, 1997

I am pleased to announce that American-led negotiations in Geneva have resulted today in a landmark agreement that will liberalize world trade in telecommunications services. Telecommunications services trade—including telephone, data, satellite, and cellular services—is already a \$600 billion industry. It is expected to grow to more than \$1 trillion over the next 10 years. U.S. telecommunications firms are the most competitive in the world. This agreement will open markets in nations that account for over 90 percent of the world's telecommunications trade and allow U.S. companies to compete on an equal basis. Today's agreement will bring clear benefits to American workers, businesses, and consumers alike—new jobs, new markets, and lower prices—and will spread the benefits of a technology revolution to citizens around the world.

Just 2 months ago the United States led efforts to complete the Information Technology Agreement, which zeroes out tariffs on a broad range of information technology goods, such as computers, telephone equipment, and semiconductors. Today's agreement opens markets for the services for which many of those information technology products are used—basic telecommunications. These are critical steps toward realization of the American vision of a global information infrastructure.

I want to thank the Vice President for his important role in launching these negotiations nearly 3 years ago. I also want to congratulate America's Trade Representative-designate, Ambassador Charlene Barshefsky, for her skilled and determined efforts. This important agreement advances our interests