

## **The President's Radio Address**

*October 25, 1997*

**The President.** Good morning. I want to talk to you today about the vital importance of mammography in our fight against breast cancer. The tragedy of breast cancer has touched the lives of nearly every American family, including my own. This year alone, 180,000 women will be newly diagnosed with breast cancer and more than 40,000 women will die from the devastating disease.

Since I took office, fighting breast cancer has been one of my top priorities. We've nearly doubled funding for breast cancer research, prevention, and treatment. The recent discovery of two breast cancer genes by NIH scientists holds out great promise for new prevention strategies, and we continue to work to find a cure.

Until that day, we know that early detection is the most potent weapon we possess in our battle against breast cancer, and we know that mammography is the best way to detect breast cancer so that it can be treated before it's too late.

The First Lady and I have worked hard to make mammograms available to more women and to encourage more women to get mammograms. The historic balanced budget I signed into law last summer makes annual mammograms far more affordable for women on Medicare and extends this potentially life-saving benefit to all Medicare beneficiaries over the age of 40.

Hillary has led our national campaign to educate women about the vital importance of mammography, and I'd like to ask her to say a few words about it.

**The First Lady.** Mammography can mean the difference between life and death for millions of women. Yet I know from my conversations with women around the country, particularly older women, that far too many think they don't need mammograms because they are past their childbearing years. Others are afraid of mammograms. Still others don't know that their health insurance covers the test.

The National Mammography Campaign was launched to dispel myths and fears about mammography and to increase public awareness about Medicare coverage of mammo-

grams. In the last 3 years, through community outreach, public service announcements, and partnerships with an energized business community, we have made a lot of progress. Now we must work even harder to reach women who, because of income, language, or cultural barriers, are the least likely to get mammograms.

The administration's Horizons project is doing exactly that, in six of our largest cities. This week we received the project's first report, and it is teaching us a great deal about how to reach older women who have not been getting mammograms. We are looking forward to taking what we have learned and bringing this knowledge to communities all over the country.

**The President.** The success of our campaign depends upon our ability to reach as many women as possible. This week, the National Cancer Institute is launching a wide-reaching education program to provide health professionals and women and their families with simple, straightforward information about the newest research and recommendations for early detection. These publications will reach thousands of women with a simple message. Mammograms are available, effective, and safe, and they can save your life.

When women do go for a mammogram, we must make sure they receive the highest quality care. High-quality mammograms can detect the vast majority of breast tumors and, when followed by prompt treatment, can reduce the risk of death by as much as 30 percent. Women need and deserve that security.

That is why today I'm pleased to announce new FDA regulations that will ensure medical facilities, health providers, and detection equipment are all held to the highest possible standards so that every woman gets the quality care she needs when she needs it most. With these steps, we're giving women and their families a powerful tool to fight breast cancer and new hope that the fight can be won.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:47 p.m. on October 24 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 25.

**Remarks to the National Italian-American Foundation**

October 25, 1997

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for the warm welcome. Thank you for singing “Happy Birthday” to Hillary. I think the reason she—[*applause*—I think the reason she wanted to come here is she wanted to make sure she got an Italian birthday cake, and she did. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, Frank Guarini, for your warm words and your friendship and for your service on behalf of our country at the United Nations. Thank you, Frank Stella, and I’m glad to see all the Members of Congress here. We have some members of the administration here. We have Jack Valenti here, who lets me watch movies at the White House. [*Laughter*] The best perk of being President is the movie theater, plus knowing Jack Valenti. [*Laughter*]

I’m also very glad that the Deputy Prime Minister of Italy, Walter Veltroni, is here, and I thank him for his leadership. You know, I’ve been spoiled coming to these dinners. A couple of years ago I came and Danny DeVito was here, and he jumped in my lap. [*Laughter*] I was afraid Al Pacino would jump in my lap tonight—[*laughter*—but I had other choices.

I want to thank you for the people you’re honoring tonight for their service and for their representation of the values of the National American-Italian Foundation. Especially, I want to thank you for honoring my friend Leon Panetta. You heard Frank Guarini mention some, but I must say not all, of the Italian-Americans who have prominent positions in our administration. I’m sad to tell you that the complaint has been filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission claiming that I have overrepresented Italians in my administration—[*laughter*—and I plead guilty.

I can’t say enough about Leon Panetta. We went to Rome together, and I spoke, and Leon translated my speech. Most people thought he was giving the speech. [*Laughter*] I felt like that old joke about the Pope, you know, everybody said, “Who is that guy up there with Leon Panetta?” [*Laughter*] I miss him and Sylvia terribly, but I know they’re

having a good time in California. And I can tell you that if this country had a few more citizens like him, we would have a lot fewer problems, and I’m glad you’re honoring him tonight. I would also like to congratulate and thank Congressman Tom Foglietta for his service, about-to-be service as our new Ambassador to Italy.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a night of joy and a night for the honorees, and I don’t want to take a lot of your time. But I would like to say that, in a very real sense, what I have tried to do as President is to pursue a course that would reflect the values that are held so deeply by Italian-American families who have come to our shores and who have enjoyed such great success.

When I came here, I thought that Washington was, frankly, too divided, not just politically between Democrats and Republicans but almost intellectually divided. Everything was either/or. Should the Government do everything, or should it do nothing? The answer is, it should do neither. It should focus on giving people the tools to succeed and helping other people to climb the ladder that so many of you have climbed.

With so many people having to work and having children, should they have to choose? Of course not. Sometimes I still believe that our greatest challenge is to enable Americans to succeed at work and at home at their most important job, raising their children. Should we be able to grow our economy and preserve our natural heritage? I think we should. I think that is a false choice.

So I ask you all, whether you’re Republicans or Democrats or wherever you are on the political spectrum, to always, always say that the United States should pursue a course that is consistent with our values and not be fooled into thinking that we have to sacrifice things that are fundamental to move ahead. The truth is, when we find a way to move ahead consistent with our values, we do better more quickly.

I’m very grateful for the success that the United States is enjoying today, and I’m grateful for the role that Italian-Americans have played in it, and I hope we can continue to do more.

Finally, let me say I’m very grateful to this organization for the support you’ve given to