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centers, train child care workers, and educate parents. We have to also strengthen the enforcement of State codes and licensing requirements, weed out bad providers, and through tougher criminal background checks, make sure that the wrong people aren't doing the right mission that we all need done properly. Finally, we ought to offer scholarships to talented caregivers.

Now, let me take a minute to thank our State leaders, from North Carolina to Washington State, from Rhode Island to Minnesota, for their efforts at improving child care and promoting early learning across America. I know Governor Almond of Rhode Island is here, and I want to especially thank him for Rhode Island's child opportunity zone program. It is a national model.

We are living in what may well be the most exciting era of human history. But the globalization, the information and technology revolution, they continue to alter the way we live and work, the way we do business, and the way we relate to each other and the rest of the world. They make some jobs easier; they render others obsolete. But nothing must be permitted to undermine the first responsibilities of parenthood.

No raise or promotion will ever top the joy of hugging a child after work. Nothing can be more bittersweet than sending a child you once cradled off in your arms off to college for the first time. [*Laughter*] Nothing weighs more heavily on a parent's mind than the well-being of a child in the care of others. No issue is more important to any family.

You know, a lot of us have had our own experiences with child care. I've often wondered how my mother, when she was widowed, would have been able to go back to school if I hadn't been able to move in with my grandparents. I was lucky, and it turned out reasonably well for me. [*Laughter*] But how many children are out there with exactly the same potential, who never got the same break by pure accident of family circumstance? You don't know the answer to that, and neither do I. But we know what the answer should be. The answer should be, not a single one.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:27 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Lincoln Almond of Rhode Island.

Statement on the Death of Manuel Zurita

January 7, 1998

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Customs Senior Special Agent Manuel Zurita. We are eternally grateful for the courage and bravery of the men and women who protect us each and every day. This tragic accident painfully reminds us of the risks our law enforcement officials face keeping our country safe.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife and their four children as they deal with this devastating loss.

NOTE: Agent Zurita was fatally injured in a January 1 boat accident while aboard a U.S. Customs Service vessel providing security for the President's arrival in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in New York City

January 8, 1998

Thank you very much. The good news is this is the only speech I have. [*Laughter*] And I wrote it in the car on the way over from the airport. I want to thank Steve for what he said and for the extraordinary effort he's put in, in a very difficult and challenging year, as head of our National Democratic Party. I thank Craig and Jane for having us in their home. I have not been in this magnificent historic old building in, oh, about 10 or 11 years. And I'm a very schmaltzy person so I get all choked up when I come here. I keep imagining whether I'm standing someplace where John Lennon was, and all that. [*Laughter*] Thank you very much for letting us come here. Thank you, Judith Hope, for leading the New York Democratic Party.

And I think what I would like to do today is just talk in kind of a larger sense about where I think we are at this moment in history and why what you're doing here matters.