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whatever they're doing. And that's what we have to do on this issue. This is a huge thing for millions and millions and millions of Americans. But for all of us—for all of us—even if we live our entire lives and never get sick, we should always remember the picture that Dr. Ganske showed us and the story he told, because if you love America and you believe in the promise of America, everyone of you, without regard to your party or your philosophy, has a personal, deep, vested interest in seeing every child like that treated with the dignity that we say in our Constitution and Bill of Rights is the God-given inherent right of every person on Earth.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. in the Dirksen Senate Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Barbara A. Blakeney, second vice president, American Nurses Association; and Randolph D. Smoak, Jr., M.D., chairman, American Medical Association.

Joint Statement on United States-Romanian Relations

July 16, 1998

President Clinton and President Emil Constantinescu met today at the White House to discuss ongoing efforts to strengthen bilateral relations through the U.S.-Romania Strategic Partnership, as well as common efforts to advance regional cooperation, security and stability in Southeast Europe. They also discussed NATO's open door policy and Romania's aspirations to join the Alliance.

The two Presidents expressed great satisfaction with the status of the bilateral relationship, which has expanded significantly over the past year. They noted in particular the deepening of relations through the development of the U.S.-Romania Strategic Partnership, announced during President Clinton's visit to Bucharest last July, and the key role it plays in the U.S. Action Plan for Southeastern Europe as well as for the overall stability of Central and Eastern Europe.

The Presidents reviewed the outcome of the latest round of Strategic Partnership talks, held July 15 at the Department of State. A wide variety of joint projects have been completed successfully in the first year of the Partnership. The two militaries collaborated on Partnership for Peace and bilateral exercises, exchanged students at military institutions, and agreed to establish a regional center for defense resources management in Romania. U.S. and Romanian law enforcement agencies are working closely together in the fight against global threats such as drug trafficking, money laundering, illegal migration and organized crime. The two sides also discussed plans to establish a center for regional cooperation in the fight against cross-border crime in Bucharest. Bilateral agreements on civil aviation, on scientific and technological cooperation, on customs cooperation, and on peaceful nuclear cooperation were signed during President Constantinescu's visit.

In the coming year, the two governments have agreed the Partnership will place greater emphasis on the economic sector, focusing on energy, information technology and on the development of small- and medium-size enterprises. President Clinton reiterated the U.S. commitment under the Strategic Partnership to help make Romania the strongest possible candidate for NATO membership and integration into other Western structures. Partnership activities aimed at increasing political cooperation, and coordinating efforts to combat non-traditional threats will also continue to progress.

The Presidents reviewed the pace of free market reforms in Romania as a part of Romania's efforts to consolidate its political transition, reinvigorate its economic transition, and hasten its full integration into Euroatlantic institutions. They emphasized the crucial need to accelerate privatization of large state enterprises and banks, to push forward restructuring of privatized companies, and to refocus reforms with the aim of negotiating a new IMF agreement. The Presidents agreed that these reforms, combined with a stable legal environment, will attract greater U.S. investment, which in turn will further Romania's overall development. President Constantinescu noted that Minister for Privatization Sorin Dimitriu has been named Trade and Investment Ombudsman, to help U.S. and other foreign investors expedite and streamline bureaucratic procedures to successfully do business in Romania.

President Clinton expressed appreciation for Romania's ongoing assistance on issues affecting the two countries' security, including participation in Dayton implementation efforts in Bosnia and offer to contribute to the post-UNPREDEP mission in FYR Macedonia as well as to other missions in the region. The two Presidents expressed their mutual concern over the situation in Kosovo and reiterated their determination to work together with other interested parties to promote a diplomatic resolution of this crisis.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on Signing the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998

July 16, 1998

Today, I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 3130, the "Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998." My Administration has conducted an unprecedented campaign to increase parental responsibility to ensure that parents support their children. We have had many successes. Through tougher enforcement, we have collected a record $13.4 billion in child support, an increase of 68 percent since 1992, with 1.4 million more families now receiving child support. In addition, we located one million delinquent parents during the first 9 months of using a new collection system that tracks parents across State lines—a system initiated as part of the 1996 welfare law, and first proposed by my Administration in 1994. On paternity establishment, which is often the crucial first step in child support cases, in 1997, a record 1.3 million paternities were established, two and a half times as many as in 1992. Last month, I signed the Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act of 1998, a law based on my Administration's 1996 proposal to crack down on egregious child support evaders by creating a new felony offense for those who flee across State lines to avoid supporting their children.

However, there is much more that we can and must do. H.R. 3130 will build on this progress and help ensure that parents give their children all the support they need and deserve. First, the new law puts in place additional tough penalties for States that fail to automate their child support computer systems on time. Under this new law, States that fail to establish these State-wide systems face automatic and escalating penalties, ranging from 4 percent of Federal child support enforcement funds for the first year to 30 percent for the fifth year in which a State fails to meet national certification standards. Second, H.R. 3130 incorporates a proposal that my Administration sent to the Congress last year to reward States for their performance on a wide range of key child support goals, such as the number of paternity establishments and child support orders, rather than only on cost-effectiveness, as current law provides. Third, the law will make it easier for States to secure medical support for children in cases in which the non-custodial parent has private health coverage, by facilitating the creation of a medical support notice that all health plans will recognize.

Many members of Congress, Administration officials, State officials, experts, and children's advocates worked together constructively in a bipartisan fashion to craft this valuable piece of legislation, and I wish to thank them for their efforts. In particular, I would like to thank Representatives Levin and Shaw, and Senators Moynihan, Roth, Rockefeller, and Baucus.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 16, 1998.

NOTE: H.R. 3130, approved July 16, was assigned Public Law No. 105–200.

Statement on Senate Action on Food Safety Legislation

July 16, 1998

I welcome today's 66–33 vote to restore much needed funds to our food safety programs. Food safety should not be about politics; instead it must be about protecting our families and children. Today, the Senate put Americans first and partisanship last. With this money we will be able to improve safety inspections of foods, better educate the public on how to handle food safely, improve research, and aid the effort to track food