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we're well over half the way toward our goal of hiring 10,000 by the year 2000.

Fourth, let me say again, I think it's important that we do more to bring the benefits of this economic revival our country is enjoying into isolated urban and rural areas where free enterprise has not yet reached. A lot of the people who are still stuck on welfare are physically separate from the job availability. And I have asked the Congress to approve a second round of empowerment zones, to approve a whole range of initiatives, and Secretary Herman and Secretary Cuomo's budget designed to create jobs principally in the private sector in isolated inner-city and rural neighborhoods. So I hope that will be a part of the work we conclude in the days remaining in this congressional session.

Welfare reform itself was a bipartisan effort. It became an American issue. Now, providing jobs and opportunity and new businesses and new free enterprise in these neighborhoods that still have not felt the economy should also be an American issue.

We have now the lowest unemployment in 28 years, the lowest inflation in 32 years, the highest homeownership in history. Wages are on the rise for our families after 20 years of stagnation. This is our window of maximum opportunity to make sure every poor person in America stuck on welfare has a chance to be a part of America's future and to share in the American dream. if we can't do it now, when our economy and our prospects and our confidence are so strong, then when?

Now we have jobs waiting to be filled in almost every community. I've been working with people here in Washington, DC—there are hundreds of thousands of jobs in information technology-related fields open today, everywhere from Silicon Valley to the suburban areas of the Nation's Capital. If we make the best use of this time, we can change the whole culture of poverty and long neglected neighborhoods. We can help millions more people ensure that their children will be raised in homes full of hope and pride based on dignity and work.

To all of you who have made this day come to pass, who have played a role in the progress of the last 2 years, and to all of you who are committed to keeping on until the job is done, I extend the thanks of our Nation. Great job. Let's do better.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Vesta Kimble, deputy director, Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services, MD; and Eli Segal, president and chief executive officer, Welfare to Work Partnership.

Statement on the Death of Arthur Barbieri

August 4, 1998

Hillary and I are deeply saddened by the death of Arthur Barbieri. New Haven has lost a great political leader; I have lost a mentor and a friend.

When I was a law student, I was lucky enough to work by Arthur's side and learn grassroots politics at its absolute best. I'm forever grateful for all that he taught me. Our thoughts and prayers are with his loved ones.

Statement on House Action on Credit Union Legislation

August 4, 1998

I am pleased that the House has passed the "Credit Union Membership Access Act" to protect and strengthen credit unions for the 71 million Americans who own, use , and rely upon them. This bill resolves uncertainty about the future of credit unions created by a recent Supreme Court decision by protecting existing credit union members and making it easier for credit unions to expand where appropriate. It also helps put credit unions on sounder footing by making important reforms that could pay enormous dividends in more difficult times. This bill ensures that consumers continue to have a broad array of choices in financial services, and, when Congress sends me this bill, I will sign it.