

these good times to deal with the big long-term challenges we face. And number two, if somebody asks you why you're a Democrat, why did you come here tonight, tell them, because that's the party that believes that no matter where you come from and what your circumstances, you ought to have an equal chance to live out your dream. That's the party that believes that no matter what our differences, what unites us is more important than what divides us, and we want an American family. And that's the party that believes that the purpose of our public life is to elevate the spirits and the vision and the heart of the American people.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:55 p.m. in the Los Angeles Room at the Century Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Janice Griffin, national vice chair, Women's Leadership Forum; Joseph P. Andrew, national chairman-designate, Democratic National Committee; Lara Brown and Paul Krekorian, cochairs, Saxophone Club, Los Angeles chapter; State Controller Kathleen Connell; State Assembly Speaker Antonio R. Villaraigosa; and Gov. Gray Davis of California and his wife, Sharon. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address *February 27, 1999*

Good morning. One of Government's first responsibilities is to keep our people safe. And one of the most successful Governmental efforts to protect the public is in the area of auto safety. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been saved, thanks to laws requiring safety features such as bumpers, seatbelts, and airbags.

Today I want to talk about our latest efforts to make car travel even safer for our smallest and most vulnerable passengers. Over the past 20 years, child car seats have become a fact of life for millions of parents. Where once small children bounced around freely and dangerously in our cars, today the majority ride in car seats, whether for quick errands to the grocery store or long cross-country journeys. Those car seats have made a difference. Since 1975, they've saved the lives of about 4,000 children in motor vehicle accidents.

But all too often car seats don't protect our children as well as they should. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration estimates that more than 70 percent of all children riding in car seats are at risk of injury because their seats have not been properly installed. Now, anyone who has ever struggled to get a car seat to fit snugly into a backseat knows exactly what I'm talking about.

Most seatbelts were not designed to hold car seats, and not all 100 models of car seats can fit all 900 types of vehicles on our road today. For Joe Colella's family, the consequences were tragic. Five years ago Joe's 3-year-old niece, Dana Hutchinson, was killed in a head-on collision because her car seat was incompatible with the seatbelts in her family's car. Ever since, so that no other family has to suffer this tragedy, Joe has worked full-time to improve car seat safety and to alert parents to the dangers of poorly fitting car seats.

A few years ago, my administration appointed Joe to a blue-ribbon panel of parents, consumer groups, medical professionals, and auto and seat manufacturers to find ways to make car seats safer and easier to install. Today I'm pleased to announce that their top recommendation, a simple, universal system for attaching car safety seats, will become the standard for every new car and light truck sold in our country.

By the year 2000, the Department of Transportation will require every safety seat to have three standard attachments designed to fit three standard anchors in the backseat of every car. With this new rule, and with these three simple attachments, we can save lives and prevent up to 3,000 injuries a year.

But the challenge of keeping our children safe in our cars and on our roads is never ending. We must continue to encourage all drivers and passengers to buckle up, to use booster seats and seatbelts for their older children. We must work to make airbags safer for children and smaller adults. And we must press forward in our fight to keep more drunk drivers off our roads by lowering the national drunk driving standard to .08.

Together we can work to make sure more Americans traveling on our roads, especially

more young Americans, come safely home to their families and loved ones.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:36 p.m. on February 26 in the Manager's Office at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in San Francisco, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 26 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Radio Remarks on "Read Across America" Day

March 1, 1999

The best and most enjoyable way for children to open their minds is by opening a book. This Tuesday America will celebrate "Read Across America" Day. More than one million people—from baseball star Cal Ripken, Jr., to the sailors of the U.S.S. *Saipan*—will share the joy of reading with children in every part of our country. I encourage all caring adults to get involved. Read to children on "Read Across America" Day, and read to them every day. Together, we can make our children the best readers in the world.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 2:55 p.m. in the Oval Office on February 22 for later broadcast as a public service announcement. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Radio Actuality Line.

Radio Remarks on Internet Accessibility in Classrooms

March 1, 1999

Vice President Gore and I have set a goal of connecting every classroom in America to the Internet. I'm pleased to announce that new Department of Education data show that more than half of all our Nation's classrooms are now connected—nearly twice as many connections as last year. And thanks to new E-rate discounts that help schools and libraries connect to the Internet, we'll reach our goal of every classroom and library connected by the year 2000.

Computers and new educational software can make a real difference in the way teachers teach and a student learns. Because of our efforts, children in poorer or isolated areas will now have access to the same universe of knowledge as children in the most affluent suburbs. All our children will be technologically literate and better prepared for the high-tech, high-wage jobs of the future. But we also must make sure that teachers are as comfortable with a computer as they are with a chalkboard. That's why Congress should support my \$800 million educational technology initiative, including more than \$100 million for technology training for the teachers themselves.

By giving our children the skills they need to succeed in the jobs of the future, we'll build a stronger nation for the 21st century. I want to especially thank Vice President Gore, who's done so much to put the future at the fingertips of our children.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 1:40 p.m. on February 26 in the Manager's Office at the Grant Hyatt Hotel in San Francisco, CA, for later broadcast. The remarks were also made available on the White House Press Radio Actuality Line.

Statement on Internet Accessibility in Classrooms

March 1, 1999

Vice President Gore and I have set a goal of connecting every classroom in America to the Internet by the year 2000. Today I am pleased to announce that new Department of Education data show that more than half of all classrooms are connected—nearly twice as many connections as last year. And thanks to new E-rate discounts that help schools and libraries connect to the Internet, we will reach our goal by the year 2000.

Computers, the Internet, and educational software can make a real difference in the way teachers teach and students learn. Because of our efforts, children in the most isolated inner city or rural town will have access to the same universe of knowledge as a child in the most affluent suburb. Parents will be able to communicate more frequently with teachers and keep up with the progress of