

trading system and the global economy, by ending the worst forms of child labor, we will be giving our children the 21st century they deserve.

These are hopeful times. Previous generations sought to redeem the rights of labor in a time of world war and organized tyranny. We have a chance to build a world more prosperous, more united, more humane than ever before. In so doing, we can fulfill the dreams of the ILO's founders and redeem the struggles of those who fought and organized, who sacrificed and, yes, died for freedom, equality, and justice in the workplace.

It is our great good fortune that in our time we have been given the golden opportunity to make the 21st century a period of abundance and achievement for all. Because we can do that, we must. It is a gift to our children worthy of the millennium.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in the Assembly Hall at the United Nations Building. In his remarks, he referred to Juan Somavia, director general, Alhaji Muhammad Mumuni, conference president, International Labor Organization; and Vladimir Petrovsky, director general, United Nations Office at Geneva. The President also referred to the IPEC, International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor.

Statement on the Proposed "Work Incentives Improvement Act"

June 16, 1999

Nearly a year ago, I committed to working with Senators Jeffords and Kennedy to pass the "Work Incentives Improvement Act." In January, in my State of the Union Address, I urged the Congress make this historic, bipartisan legislation a top priority and fully funded it in the budget I sent to Congress. And on June 4th I challenged the Congress to send the work incentives bill to me by July 26th, so I could sign this legislation into law on the 9th anniversary of the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Today, in an overwhelming 99 to 0 vote, the Senate passed the work incentives bill. This impressive vote sends a strong signal that all Americans, including people with disabilities, should have the opportunity to

work. Americans with disabilities can and do bring tremendous energy and talent to the American work force, but the unemployment rate for all working-age adults with disabilities is nearly 75 percent. One of the most glaring problems is that people with disabilities frequently become ineligible for Medicaid or Medicare if they go back to work. This puts people with disabilities in the untenable position of choosing between health care coverage and work. The "Work Incentives Improvement Act" would improve job opportunities for people with disabilities by increasing access to health care and employment services.

Senators Jeffords, Kennedy, Roth, and Moynihan deserve special recognition for their leadership on this historic legislation. I urge the House to follow their lead. Under the leadership of Congressmen Bliley, Dingell, Waxman, and Lazio, I am confident that it will. I also hope and expect the Senate and House to find offsets for this bill that are acceptable to all parties. This bill will provide critical work opportunities to people with disabilities, and I look forward to signing this groundbreaking legislation.

Statement on the Proposed "Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act of 1999"

June 16, 1999

I am pleased that today a bipartisan group of Senators, led by Senators Chafee and McCain and including Senators Graham, Mack, Moynihan, and Jeffords, have taken an important step in ensuring health care coverage for children by introducing the "Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act of 1999."

When I signed the 1996 welfare reform law, I pledged to work toward reversing the unnecessary cuts in benefits to legal immigrants that had nothing to do with the goal of moving people from welfare to work. As part of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and the Agricultural Research Act of 1998, my administration worked with Congress to restore vital health, nutritional, and disability benefits to hundreds of thousands of vulnerable legal immigrants. Recognizing that more