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you for recognizing the important role you can play in extending these opportunities to all Americans.

I am proud to say, also under the Vice President's leadership, the Federal Government has done its part. Our goal was to hire 10,000 people by this year from welfare. We have now hired 14,000—in the smallest Federal Government since 1963.

Mr. Mayor, one of the people we hired from welfare is here with us today. Her name is Maria Hernandez. She was on public assistance for more than 3 years; now she's worked as an administrative assistant in our Cook County north census office since January. Thank you, Maria, and thank all the rest of you who are here who reflect the same story. [*Applause*] Thank you.

Now, before we get on with the program today, I want to tell you that as pleased as we are, we have to do more. And I'd like to mention the things that I believe we have to do to make the most of this economic opportunity for America, to fulfill our moral obligation, to promote the values of work and family to the people still on public assistance and those who teeter going back and forth.

First, we must continue to honor our commitment to welfare reform. There are some in Congress who want to cut the welfare block grants we give to the States and take some of that money back, because the welfare rolls are so low, to finance a big tax cut. I think that would be a mistake, and here's why. Here's why. In every State, there are still people who could move from welfare to work if they had more training, if they had transportation, if they had child care. In every State, there are people who may be working today who might have to leave the work force, for lack of transportation or child care. In every State, there are people who can stay on the job if they get further training.

So I say, let's spend this money to develop the human capacity of our people. It will make the economy stronger, and we will all be better off.

There are other things which need to be done. I have asked the Congress to build on the welfare-to-work program, by helping those who are least prepared to work. My welfare-to-work budget this year contains extra funds for adult literacy and for education and training for adults. I think that's important.

We must also do more to help low-income fathers honor their responsibility to pay child support to their children. Three years ago, we strengthened our child support enforcement laws. This welfare-to-work budget targets funds to help responsible fathers work and pay child support. I hope Congress will pass it.

Let me say, we also need to make sure that when people move from welfare to work, they understand, if they're in low-income jobs, that their kids are still entitled to Medicaid coverage if their employer doesn't offer health care, and to food stamps, so they'll have adequate nutrition.

The only piece of troubling news in this whole happy scenario is that there has been a drop in use of food stamps among low-income people that is greater than the number of people who have moved into jobs with incomes above that level. No one can find the answer for me, and we've been looking now for weeks and weeks and weeks. But I think, clearly, what has happened is, a lot of people moved from welfare to work; they're delighted to be at work; and they literally don't know that they're still eligible for this assistance. That's what I think is going on. So we have to work on that, and a lot of you here can help.

We also have to strengthen our commitment to child care. For years, mothers on welfare chose not to work because to do so would literally have hurt their children, because it would have cost them more in child care than they could make on the job. In 1996 we added $4 billion to our child care subsidy, but believe it or not, we have only met one-tenth of the need. So I ask Congress to pass our child care initiative, to provide more child care subsidies and tax credits to needy families and new funds to improve the quality of care. This will also help to sustain welfare reform.

To finish the job, I've asked Congress to double our commitment to transportation assistance to provide 25,000 new welfare-to-work housing vouchers so people can live near their jobs. To finish the job, I have asked Congress to increase the minimum wage, to

make sure, when people work, they are living above the poverty line. And to finish the job, we have to recognize that there are whole communities—big inner-city neighborhoods, places in Appalachia, places in the Mississippi Delta, small towns where the only factory has moved away, Native American reservations—where the light of prosperity has not shined on the whole community.

Last month I traveled across America to shine that spotlight on the inner cities, on the Mississippi Delta, on Appalachia, on the Native American communities. I saw families doing their best to raise children in neighborhoods where unemployment and poverty were more than double the national average. On some of our Indian reservations it is above 70 percent.

I ask your help in passing my new markets initiative, because it will give American investors the same incentives to invest in poor neighborhoods in America we give them today to invest in poor countries around the world. I think it is a very, very good idea.

And finally, I ask you to continue your work. We all know that the people who still are on welfare, by and large, are the most difficult to place in work. We all know that they are the most likely to have children with special needs, or limited levels of education and skills, or to be a long way from an available workplace with no transportation funds. We know there are problems out there, but we also know that there are good people who wish to go to work and ought to have the chance. And so I ask you to stay at this and to recruit some of your vendors and clients, to reach out to small business people you know, to ask others to join this crusade.

I want to say a special word of thanks to IBM for sponsoring a new on-line network that can help match businesses who need workers with welfare recipients who need jobs. And for out part, I want you to know I'm working to extend the welfare-to-work tax credit and the work opportunity tax credit to reward those of you who take the chance on giving more Americans a chance. [*Applause*] Thank you.

The great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy once said that, ''work is the true source of human welfare.'' In this era of unprecedented prosperity, we still have some work of our own to do to make sure the we embrace all Americans in this prosperity and to give every American the chance to succeed at work and to succeed at home.

I thank every one of you for what you have done, and I ask you to support the initiatives I outlined with the Congress and to stay at the job until we can literally say we have completely ended welfare as we know it, and America is a better place because our families are stronger, our children are growing up in more stable homes, and every adult American who is willing to work has a chance to do so.

Thank you very, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. at the Navy Pier Festival Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago; Gov. George H. Ryan of Illinois; Gov. Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin; Gov. Thomas R. Carper of Delaware; Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver, CO; Mayor Paul Helmke of Fort Wayne, IN; Mayor Marc Morial of New Orleans, LA; Mayor Beverly O'Neill of Long Beach, CA; Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services Olivia Golden, Administration for Children and Families; Alvin C. Collins, Director, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families; Eli Segal, president and chief executive officer, Welfare to Work Partnership; Gerald Greenwald, chairman and chief executive officer, United Airlines Corp.; Paul Clayton, president, Burger King North America; Robert B. Shapiro, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, Monsanto Co.; William T. Esrey, chairman and chief executive officer, Sprint Corp.; and James P. Kelly, chairman and chief executive officer, United Parcel Service.

Closing Remarks to the National Welfare to Work Forum in Chicago

August 3, 1999

I've been asked to announce that as soon as we adjourn this meeting, in this very spot, Rodney will be offering memory training to everyone who would like to stay. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank you for you devotion to this cause. And Jim, thank you for giving us this fine man. I just want to ask you all to think about something. You know, while Rodney was talking to all the people here, I just got to sit here in the middle, and so I could see everybody else. And I would turn