

buildings. In a second joint resolution approved June 9, 1966 (80 Stat. 194), the Congress requested the President also to issue annually a proclamation designating the week during which June 14 falls as “National Flag Week” and calling upon all citizens of the United States to display the flag during that week.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim June 14, 2000, as Flag Day and the week beginning June 11, 2000, as National Flag Week. I direct the appropriate officials to display the flag on all Federal Government buildings during that week, and I urge all Americans to observe Flag Day and National Flag Week by flying the Stars and Stripes from their homes and other suitable places.

I also call upon the people of the United States to observe with pride and all due ceremony those days from Flag Day through Independence Day, also set aside by the Congress (89 Stat. 211), as a time to honor our Nation, to celebrate our heritage in public gatherings and activities, and to recite publicly the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on June 14. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Bankruptcy Reform Legislation

June 9, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

I write to urge a fair resolution of the open issues in discussions on bankruptcy reform. I have long made clear my support for legislation that would encourage responsibility and reduce abuses of the bankruptcy system on

the part of debtors and creditors alike. We also must ensure that a reasonable fresh start is available for those who turn to bankruptcy as a last resort when facing divorce, unemployment, illness, and uninsured medical expenses. Bankruptcy reform legislation should strike the right balance.

The House-passed bill was so one-sided that I would have vetoed it. The Senate-passed bill’s bankruptcy provisions represented a better attempt to balance legitimate debtor and creditor interests, although I had serious concerns about some aspects. My Administration has watched carefully as the staff and informal conferees have sought to reconcile these two bills. While there appears to be some informal progress on some outstanding issues, it is very important that the resolution of these issues be fair and that we ensure that we do not erode protections for all debtors—when targeting the few who abuse the system. The outcome will help determine whether the final bill tips the scales. I am concerned, for example, that the final bill:

- may not adequately address the problem of wealthy debtors who use overly broad homestead exemptions to shield assets from their creditors;
- may weaken important credit card disclosure provisions that will help ensure consumers understand the implications of the debt they are incurring;
- may eliminate protections for reasonable retirement pensions that reflect years of contributions by workers and their employers; and
- may include an anti-consumer provision eliminating existing law protections against inappropriate collection practices when collecting from people who bounce a check.

Finally, I am deeply disturbed that some in Congress still object to a reasonable provision that would end demonstrated abuse of the bankruptcy system. We cannot tolerate abusive bankruptcy filings to avoid the legal consequences of violence, vandalism, and harassment used to deny access to legal health services. An effective approach, such as the one offered by Senator Schumer’s amendment, should be included in the final legislation.

I sincerely hope that balanced, bipartisan bankruptcy reform will be completed this year, but I will not hesitate to veto unfair legislation that fails the test of balance.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

June 10, 2000

Good morning. As we enter the new century, opportunity is abundant. We're in the midst of the longest economic expansion in history, with 22 million new jobs and the lowest unemployment in 30 years. Yet we know some Americans are finding it harder and harder to balance the demands of work and family. People are working more jobs and longer hours than ever before, forcing many of them to make the unacceptable choice between being good workers and the best parents or caregivers.

Today I want to speak with you about important new steps we're taking to give working Americans the time off they need to care for their families without losing the income they need to support them.

According to a recent Federal study, parents in the average family now have 22 fewer hours per week to spend at home than they did just a generation ago. That's the loss of nearly a full day to spend time with their families. And the percentage of married mothers working outside the home has nearly doubled, from 38 to 68 percent, over the last three decades.

We also know that many of them are working weekends or on the night shift, times they've traditionally spent at home caring for their families. In our round-the-clock economy, there just doesn't seem to be enough hours during the day for working Americans to do everything they need to.

For more than 7 years now, our administration has taken action to give families the flexibility they need to balance the demands of work and home. We've helped make child care safer, better, and more affordable for millions of families. We've greatly expanded preschool and after-school programs. We fought to give generous tax credits to help the growing number of families who provide care for aging and ailing loved ones at home.

I'm especially proud that the very first bill I signed as President was the Family and Medical Leave Act. Since 1993, more than 20 million Americans have used it to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a newborn or sick relative without fear of losing their jobs. Still there are too many families that aren't making use of the law because they simply can't afford to take the time off if it means sacrificing a paycheck.

Today I'm announcing two new steps that will allow working Americans to take time off they need to care for their families without giving up the pay they need to support them.

First, I'm pleased to announce that States will soon have the option to use funds from their unemployment insurance programs to provide paid leave to new parents following the birth or adoption of a child. While this initiative is totally voluntary, there are already 15 States considering legislation to provide paid leave through unemployment insurance or other means. In fact, Massachusetts may vote on such a bill in the next few weeks.

In this strong economy, I hope more States will take advantage of this new option, and I believe those which do can provide this new benefit while still preserving the fiscal soundness of their unemployment insurance programs. The first few months with a newborn are precious ones, and no parent should have to miss them.

Second, we all know record numbers of Americans are providing for aging or ailing loved ones at home. It's a loving but potentially very expensive choice. That's why, beginning later this month, all Federal employees will be able to take up to 12 weeks paid sick leave that they've earned to nurse an ailing child or parent back to health. If every company in America followed this example,