

cannot offer policies at affordable prices that real people will buy.

So the Republican plan does not offer our seniors a chance to get prescription drug coverage—like he wants—Ed Towns—badly.

Now, you need to think about this. I mean, you're here for him, and we couldn't beat him with a stick of dynamite with this one. But it's important that you understand that every one of these elections matters. And I'm not on the ballot. I've done everything I could do to turn this country around.

I talked to a gentleman the other day who said, for a lame duck, I was still quacking pretty loudly. [*Laughter*] I'm doing all I know to do. But I want you to think about this.

I want you to remember, number one, we've got the chance of a lifetime; what are we going to do with it? I think we ought to be dealing with the big issues, big opportunities, big challenges. Number two, there are real differences between the two parties—honest—we don't have to say anything bad about the Republicans. I don't like all this. They're just differences. But number three, they hope you won't understand how deep those differences are, because most folks agree with us.

Now, those are the things I want you to remember. So if somebody asks you how come you came, say, "I like Ed Towns; he's been a good Congressman. He's fighting to deal with the things that we ought to deal with, and I'm determined not to blow the greatest chance America has ever had to build the future of our dreams for our children. And I know there are differences, and I'm going to go vote based on what I think is right."

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:15 p.m. at Trump Towers. In his remarks, he referred to event co-chairs LaDane Williamson, Ed Bergassi, and Kevin and Lisa McGovern; James R. McManus, district leader, McManus Midtown Democratic Association; and Representative Towns' wife, Gwendolyn. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

June 17, 2000

Good morning. Tomorrow America pauses to honor the countless contributions and obligations of fatherhood. When I think back on all the titles I've held—from attorney general of Arkansas to Governor to President—none of them comes close in importance and in fulfillment to the simple title of father.

Fatherhood is one of the great blessings of life and also one of the greatest challenges any man can have, especially at a time when it's becoming more and more difficult to balance the pressures of work and family.

Today I want to share some evidence with you about the critical role fathers play in their children's lives, and I want to talk about our obligation as a nation to help more fathers provide both the emotional and the financial support their children need.

We've known for a long time now that students do better in school and later in life when their parents are more actively involved in their learning. But over the years, parent involvement often has meant mothers' involvement. This assumption misses the importance of fathers. Research now confirms that involvement of both parents in a child's education makes a positive difference, and that father involvement during infancy and early childhood also contributes to a child's emotional security and enhances problem-solving in math and verbal skills.

In fact, one study showed that the chances of a child getting mostly A's increased by over 40 percent in two-parent families where the father was highly involved. Even in families where the father isn't living with his child but remains actively involved, those odds of getting A's increased by a full third.

Clearly, fathers matter when it comes to early childhood development and education. And while there is now a growing understanding of that fact, it was Vice President Al Gore who put a national spotlight on this issue during his 1994 Family Reunion Conference, and he's worked tirelessly on it ever since.

Our combined efforts are paying off. I'm pleased to release a report today from the

Departments of Education and Health and Human Services that offers educators and early childhood providers information, strategies, and tools to successfully involve more fathers in their children's learning—from encouraging more fathers to read with their kids at home to inviting more of them to volunteer in schools and child care centers.

The report highlights model programs around the country and provides resource information for practitioners. We also know that noncustodial parents who continue to be involved with their children are more likely to pay child support. The sad fact is that one in three children in America today lives without his or her father. They shouldn't be punished, either emotionally or financially, because of that. That's why for 7½ years now we've made child support enforcement a top priority.

And today we've got some further evidence that our efforts are paying off. Child support collections increased 10 percent during the past year, reaching a record of nearly \$16 billion. That's double what it was in 1992. This means fewer women on welfare, fewer children in poverty, more families living in dignity.

When it comes to protecting children and building strong families and strong communities, all of us have a role to play. But first and foremost, it's about caring mothers and fathers; and then about supporting community. But Government also must do its part. And we mustn't forget that most fathers out there really do want to do a good job. That's why today I'm also directing a number of departments to develop coordinated, interagency guidance to help States and communities identify and use available Federal resources and opportunities for promoting responsible fatherhood.

The research and the results are clear: supporting, responsible fatherhood is good for children, good for families, good for our Nation. It's why we propose building on our progress with a \$255 million responsible fatherhood initiative called "Fathers Work/Families Win." The fact is, many fathers can't provide financial and emotional support to their children, not because they're deadbeat, but because they're dead-broke.

Our initiative would help at least 40,000 more low income fathers work and support their children. Unfortunately, in the spending bill passed in the House this week, the Congress turned its back on this challenge by not including any money for this important initiative. So I ask Congress to work with me across party lines to pass a budget that makes sure more fathers can live up to their responsibility. Working together, we can help fathers better fulfill the emotional, educational, and financial needs of their children.

As we prepare to celebrate the first Father's Day of the new century, let's do all we can to help more fathers live up to that title, not just through their financial support, but also by becoming more active, loving participants in their children's lives.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:15 a.m. on June 16 in Classroom 230 at Joseph C. Lanzetta School (Public School 96) in New York City for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 16 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Memorandum on Joint Guidance on Supporting Responsible Fatherhood Efforts

June 16, 2000

Memorandum for the Attorney General, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Education

Subject: Joint Guidance on Supporting Responsible Fatherhood Efforts

One of the fundamental goals of my Administration has been to strengthen fathers' involvement in their children's lives. In support of that goal, I directed all executive departments and agencies to review their policies, programs, and initiatives to ensure that they supported men in their role as fathers. The review concluded that the Federal Government can play an important role by providing coordinated guidance and resources