

care. So many people stay on welfare not because of the checks; the benefit levels, as many of you know, in real dollar terms are lower than they were 20 years ago. They do it solely because they do not want to put their children at risk of losing health care or because they do not have the money to pay for child care out of the meager wages they can earn coming from a low education base. We have got to deal with that.

I believe 2 years after a training program is completed, you have to ask people to take a job ultimately, either in the private sector or in public service. There must be, in addition to the full implementation of the welfare reform act of 1988, in my opinion, a time-certain beyond which people don't draw a check for doing nothing when they can do something. And there is a lot of work out there to be done.

Senator Boren and Senator Wofford have offered a bill to try to recreate on a very limited basis a pilot project that would take the best of what was done with the work programs of the thirties and try to throw them into the context of the nineties. We must begin now to plan for a time when people will ultimately be able to work for the check they get, whether the check comes from a private employer or from the United States taxpayers.

Today, about half the people on welfare are just the people welfare was meant to help. They fall on hard times, and they have to have public assistance. They're eager to move on with their lives. And after 5 or 6 months or 8 months they're right back at work again, struggling to make their way in the American way. About half the people on welfare stay on for over 2 years. But one in four persons, the people that we really need to try to help to break the cycle that is gripping their children and grandchildren, about one in four stays a recipient for 8 years or longer. Those are the folks that Governor Wilder I know is now working on, that many of you have tried to address the problems of, and I want to help you with that.

Second, we need to make work pay. We have to make sure that every American who works full-time, with a child in the home, does not live in poverty. If there is dignity in all work, there must be dignity for every worker. Therefore, I will propose an expansion in the earned-income tax credit which supplements the income of the working poor.

We can do that. We ought to be able to lift people who work 40 hours a week, with

kids in their home, out of poverty. And we will remove the incentive for staying in poverty. It will be much less expensive than to have Government direct supplements to pay people to remain idle. And it will reinforce the work ethic. If we can do that and at the same time do what we discussed yesterday, control health care costs and expand coverage so that no one has to stay on welfare just to take care of their children's medical needs, I think you will see a dramatic breakthrough in our efforts to liberate people from their dependency.

Third, we need tougher child support enforcement. An estimated 15 million children have parents who could pay child support but don't. We need to make sure that they do. Parents owe billions of dollars in child support that is unpaid, money that could go a long way toward cutting the welfare rolls and lifting single parents out of poverty and money that could go a long way toward helping us control Government expenditures and reducing that debt. We're going to toughen child support enforcement by creating a national databank to track down deadbeat parents, by having the States go as far as they possibly can to establish paternity at the hospital when children are born, and if I can prevail up here, by using the IRS to collect unpaid support in seriously delinquent cases. I've said it before because it's the simple truth: Governments don't raise children, people do. And even people who aren't around ought to do their part to raise the children they bring into this world.

Fourth, we need to encourage experimentation in the States. I will say again what you know so well: There are many promising initiatives right now at the State and local level, and we will work with you to encourage that kind of experimentation. I do not want the Federal Government, in pushing welfare reforms based on these general principles, to rob you of the ability to do more, to do different things. And I want to try to flesh out a little bit of the idea we discussed yesterday about the waivers. My view is that we ought to give you more elbow room to experiment.

I know I was perplexed during the recent campaign when I tried to make a statement that some people in the press said reflected waffling, and it seemed to me to express the real genius of the federal system. I said that if I were President I would approve waivers