

of experiments that I did not necessarily agree with. And they said, "You're trying to have it both ways." I said, "No, I'm not. I'm trying to honor the Founding Fathers." If we didn't disagree on anything, what would be the need for experiments? That is the nature of the experiment, is that one person has an idea different from another person.

So I will encourage all of us to work together to try things that are different. And the only thing I want to ask you in return is, let us measure these experiments and let us measure them honestly, so that if they work, we can make them the rule, we can all adopt things that work. And if they don't, we can stop and try something else. That's the only thing I ask of you. If we say, okay, we're going to have more waivers and you're going to be able to experiment in projects that use Federal dollars, let's measure the experiment, let's be honest about it. And if it works, let's tell everybody it works so we can all do it. And if it doesn't, let's have the courage to quit and admit it didn't.

I think all of us want what most people on welfare want, a country that gives you a hand up, not a handout. We don't have a person to waste. We need the talent, the energy, the skills of every man and woman, every boy and girl in this country.

Of all the problems we have with competitiveness, whether it is the deficit or the level of investment or anything else, I think all of us know in our heart of hearts America's biggest problem today is that too many of our people never get a shot at the American dream and that if all of our people were living up to the fullest of their potential, we would surely have a much easier path in solving all the issues that we constantly debate about at these meetings.

Of all my moments as Governor, one I remember with the most pride occurred here at a National Governors' Association meeting during that 2-year period when we were working on welfare reform. Governor Castle and I sponsored a panel, and I think 40 Governors attended. And we had welfare recipients from all over the country come in and talk to the Governors about what it was like to be on welfare.

A woman from Arkansas who was there, whom I knew but had not vetted for this conversation, started talking about her program and how she'd gone into a training program and she had gotten a job, all of that. And I did something lawyers are told never to do: I asked a question without knowing the answer. I said, "Do you think this program ought to be mandatory? Should everybody have to participate in this?" She said, "I sure do." And I said, "Why?" And she said, "Well, because if it wasn't, there would be a lot of people like me home watching the soaps because we don't believe we can make anything of ourselves anymore. So you've got to make it mandatory." And I said, "What's the best thing about having a job?" She said, "When my boy goes to school, and they say, 'What does your mama do for a living?', he can give an answer."

I think that moment says more than I will ever be able to say about why this is important, not just important for the poor but important for the rest of us. We must end poverty for Americans who want to work. And we must do it on terms that dignify all of the rest of us, as well as help our country to work better. I need your help, and I think we can do it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at the J.W. Marriott Hotel.

Letter to Federal Emergency Management Agency Acting Director
William C. Tidball on Disaster Assistance for Louisiana
February 2, 1993

Dear Mr. Tidball:

I have determined that the damage in certain areas of the State of Louisiana, resulting from severe storms and flooding on January 20 through January 25, 1993, is of sufficient severity

and magnitude to warrant a major disaster declaration under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act ("the Stafford Act"). I, therefore, declare that such a major disaster exists in the State of Louisiana.