

[*At this point, the President was presented with a second gift.*]

Let me say, I wish she were here to thank her personally. But this is a gift for the White House, for the American people. And I hope a lot of you from New Jersey will see this when you come in and know that it is yours. We'll

leave it there for all time from the people of New Jersey.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:43 p.m. at the Washington Sheraton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to William H. Faherty, president, New Jersey Chamber of Commerce.

## Remarks on Signing the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 *February 5, 1993*

Mrs. Yandle, I never had a better introduction. Before we thank anyone else, I think all of us should acknowledge that it was America's families who have beaten the gridlock in Washington to pass family leave, people like this fine woman all over America who talked to Members of Congress, both Democrat and Republican, who laid their plight out, who asked that their voices be heard. When Senator Gore and I ran in the election last year, we published a book called "Putting People First." I'm very proud that the first bill I am to sign as President truly puts people first.

I do want to thank the United States Congress for moving expeditiously on this matter and for doing it before their first recess so that every Member of Congress who voted for this bill can go home and say, "We are up there working on your problems and your promise, trying to make a better future for you." This sends a clearer signal than any words any of us could utter, that we have tried to give this Government back to the American people. And I am very appreciative that the Congress has moved so rapidly on this bill.

There are many, many Members of Congress here and many others who are not here who played a major role in this legislation. Time does not permit me to mention them all, but I do want to thank the Senate majority leader for his heroic efforts in the 11th hour to make sure we passed this bill; Senator Kennedy and Senator Dodd for their passionate and years-long commitment to this effort. I want to thank the Speaker, Speaker Foley, and Congressman Ford, the chairman of the committee that had jurisdiction over this bill, and Congresswoman Pat Schroeder and all the other Democrats who worked on this bill.

But I want to acknowledge, too, consistent with the promise I made in my Inaugural to reach out to members of both parties who would try to push for progress, that this bill also had passionate support among Republicans. My old colleague in the Governors' Association, Senator Kit Bond from Missouri, I thank you for your leadership. Senator Jeffords and Senator Coats I don't believe are here, but they supported this bill strongly; and Congresswoman Marge Roukema from New Jersey, her commitment on this was unwavering; Congresswoman Susan Molinari from New York and many other Republicans voted for, spoke for, and worked for this bill. I thank them, the subcommittee chairs who are here, and all the others who worked so hard to make this bill a real live promise kept for the Congress to the people of the United States.

Family medical leave has always had the support of a majority of Americans, from every part of the country, from every walk of life, from both political parties. But some people opposed it. And they were powerful, and it took 8 years and two vetoes to make this legislation the law of the land. Now millions of our people will no longer have to choose between their jobs and their families.

The law guarantees the right of up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year when it's urgently needed at home to care for a newborn child or an ill family member. This bill will strengthen our families, and I believe it will strengthen our businesses and our economy as well.

I have spent an enormous amount of time in the last 12 years in the factories and busi-