

very dim future prospects, a wise old country lawyer wrote me a letter. And he said, "Bill, you know, it takes a little bit of strength to sustain a terrible setback, but the real courage in life is living through the grind of day-to-day existence with dignity and nobility and charity." How much more true is that for people with disabilities, for whom daily existence can be a greater grind, for whom charity is harder to muster of the spirit, because so many of the rest of us have been so blindly insensitive to things which would enable all of us to get through that daily life better.

A lot of good things have happened since the seventies—Senator Kennedy talked about it—since these gentlemen and others passed the Americans with Disabilities Act. We did have a great renewal of the IDEA a year or so ago. But 75 percent of Americans with disabilities are still unemployed. You just heard why. Millions are forced to make the impossible choice between going to work and keeping their health insurance. Millions more lack the tools and services that could make the difference between dependence and independence.

We all know working is a fundamental part of what we say is the American dream. Maya Angelou once said that work is "something made greater by ourselves, and in turn, that makes us greater." You heard Karen; you heard what she said: "I'm working; how I love being at work. Oh, by the way, my family life is better, and I don't get sick as much." That is not an accident. Every single one of us, we want to be fully engaged in life. And we ought to have the chance to do so.

I like what Senator Jeffords said about how the Congressional Budget Office might or might not estimate this initiative, and I had that argument before and lost it, so I'm not going to get into that. But let me ask you this: When we've got the largest surplus in our history, the longest peacetime expansion in our history, perhaps the strongest economy we've ever had, if we cannot address this issue now, then when will we ever address it? Now is the time.

So, here is what we propose to do. First, you've already heard about the landmark legislation by Senators Jeffords, Kennedy, Roth, and Moynihan to assist millions of Americans with disabilities who want to work. Today I am pleased to announce that the balanced budget I will present to Congress fully funds this vitally important initiative. Americans should never

have to choose between the dignity of work and the health care they need. With this legislation, they'll have a ticket to work, not an impossible choice.

I will also continue to work with Congress to pass legislation I know is very important to the disability community, a strong enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights and to strengthen Social Security for the 21st century, not just for retirees but also for people with disabilities. And we ought to do it this year, with no excuses.

Second, we must make it easier for people with disabilities to get to work. As anyone with a disability can tell you, it takes more than a job to enter the work force. Often, it takes accessible transportation, specialized technology, or personal assistance. And the cost can be prohibitively high. Today I am pleased to announce a new \$1,000 tax credit so hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities will be helped to meet these critically important expenses.

Finally, we have to give people with disabilities the tools they need to succeed; we all need that. I hope all of you had a chance to experience and see the amazing displays out there in the Grand Foyer, from a portable computer kiosk that helps people with disabilities vote or find a job, to the latest voice recognition software that lets you use a computer without touching a keyboard, to a new generation of mobile telephones that connect directly to hearing aids, to a device to immediately translate music into braille. This kind of "assistive technology," as it is called, will empower people as never before. Today I am pleased to announce that my budget will double our investment in this sort of technology, to make it more available to people with disabilities. We also will help States to expand low-income loan programs to help more people afford these promising products. The Federal Government will become a model user of assistive technology. We will increase our commitment to research and development to continue our progress.

Increased access to health care, more assistance at home and in the workplace, remarkable new technologies made more available—this is how we can make sure that all Americans can take their rightful place in our 21st century workplaces.

Last summer the Vice President announced our plan to build at the FDR Memorial a new statue of President Roosevelt in the wheelchair from which he led our Nation, the wheelchair