

Jan. 15 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

Two is, we honestly believe that none of those individuals can make the most of their lives alone and that our membership in a community will enrich our own lives as it enriches others.

Today was Martin Luther King's 70th birthday. Some of the most brilliant things he ever said were about the importance of community; about how, no matter how brilliant you are, no matter how strong you are, no matter how rich you are, no matter how whatever you are, your life can only take on full meaning and texture if you are part of a community. And that's why I have worked so hard against all the divisions of the country, to make us one America.

And number three is that the essence of our democracy is that the people rule, and those of us who are elected are literally representatives of them. Whether in a representative branch of Congress or in the executive branch of the President, the power we exercise every day is not ours. We exercise it on behalf of the country as a whole. And its only legitimate

purpose is to advance all those little children out there and living up to their God-given abilities, and advance our efforts to come together as one America, and to advance our efforts to meeting the challenges and seize the opportunities of our time.

Our administration has been about that. Every day has been a joy. Even the bad days have been an honor. And I believe America is better off. And Tuesday night I'm going to ask the country to go back to work, because we've still got a lot to do.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 p.m. in the foyer at the Corcoran Gallery of Art. In his remarks, he referred to event hosts Robert Altman and his wife, Lynda Carter; Steve Grossman, national chair, Leonard Barrack, national finance chair, and Carol Pensky, treasurer, Democratic National Committee; Deborah Dingell, wife of Congressman John D. Dingell; former Gov. Ann Richards of Texas; and musician Sheryl Crow.

The President's Radio Address

January 16, 1999

Good morning. On Monday America will celebrate the birth of one of our greatest heroes, Dr. Martin Luther King. This morning I'd like to talk to you about how we can honor his legacy on that day, and all throughout the year, by rising to the call of citizen service.

This morning I'm joined by Harris Wofford, the CEO of our Corporation for National Service, a former United States Senator and, long before that, a close friend and adviser to Dr. King. Five years ago, then-Senator Wofford and Congressman John Lewis of Georgia cosponsored a bill to encourage Americans to devote Martin Luther King Day to serving in their communities. And I was proud to sign it into law. We believe that this national holiday should be a day on, not a day off, for as Dr. King once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you going to do for others?"

On Monday more than 100,000 Americans, including students, soldiers, ministers, seniors, and members of the AmeriCorps national service program, will fan out all across their commu-

nities to paint schools, clean neighborhoods, read to children. There's still time for you to sign up. You can do so at www.AmeriCorps.org.

Now, in 1993 we created AmeriCorps to give young people a chance to serve in their communities and, in the process, to earn some money for college. We gave them a chance to serve not just for a day but all year round. And since then, 100,000 young people have taken the AmeriCorps pledge. They've done remarkable things. Since Dr. King's last birthday, they've rehabilitated thousands of homes, immunized tens of thousands of children, tutored hundreds of thousands of students, performed millions of hours of service.

Just as important, our diverse AmeriCorps members are learning lessons that will last a lifetime. In the words of one member, "It's unity, people working together. You don't see color. You see people who have come together with just one purpose." For all these reasons, I will ask Congress to increase its support for AmeriCorps this year.