

are working tripled. That's incredibly positive news. According to the most recent census data, the poverty rate amongst Hispanic children has reached the lowest level in over 20 years. The poverty rate among African American children is the lowest ever recorded. There's a correlation, it seems like to me.

Behind these statistics are great personal achievements. Adversity has been overcome, and lives have changed forever. I met people all around our country who can share their stories of hard work and fighting odds that have been stacked against them. Moms and dads who are—battled addiction and have overcome addiction. Folks who have had trouble holding a job and found out that they could and realized their dreams.

The welfare law is a success because it puts Government on the side of personal responsibility, and it has helped people change their life for the better, helped people realize their dreams, helped people help themselves. That's the key aspect of the—one of the key principles of the law that makes a lot of sense, that has helped make this law effective.

Last year, the House of Representatives passed legislation to build on the successes of the 1996 welfare reform law. They did so because they want more Americans to know the pride and success that come from hard work. The law passed the House—that passed the House required 40 hours of work each week. There was a serious requirement for work. Of the 40 hours, 16 of those could be used for job training or education and, when needed, treatment for addiction. In other words, the 40 hours of work was—part of that 40 hours was helping people help themselves. And that's an important aspect of any law that encourages people to go from welfare to work.

The House bill set an ambitious goal for States to have 70 percent of the welfare recipients working within a 5-year period of time. We encourage them to think that way because we believe in setting a high

bar. We believe in the best. We don't accept mediocrity. Some say it's asking too much. But a lot of those voices were the same ones that said the 1996 law was flawed. In other words, they have low—low expectations for what is possible in this society.

Skepticism is refuted every single day, however, when we meet the hard-won successes from former welfare recipients. That's the best case that we can make, those of us who believe in expecting the best and working hard to achieve the best.

We've got new data this month refuting skepticism as well. A study from the University of Michigan shows that in the States with the strongest work incentives, single parents have seen larger increases in income than in States with weaker work requirements.

Work is the key to success in helping families lift themselves out of poverty. It's the key to success for improving the lives of our children. And the strong incentives in the House bill will encourage work. Unfortunately, the Senate never was able to act on the House bill, so it died.

Today I want to remind the new Congress we have an obligation to reauthorize the welfare bill, welfare reform, to make it work. And so I'm calling upon both Houses to get after it. Let's get a new bill up, a bill that—in which the House and Senate have got to work closely to achieve the objectives that we have just set out, the idea of getting people to work, make them less dependent upon Government, to help people in need, so they can realize their dreams.

I also want Congress to provide \$17 billion a year to help the States run their welfare programs and 4.8 billion a year to help pay for childcare. Of course, there's a funding obligation that goes with the idea of setting high goal—high standards and strong goals. And since the caseloads have fallen by half, the States will now have twice the resources to spend on welfare and job training and childcare.