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## THE WHITE HOUSE

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REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE WORKERS AND TRAINEES OF CESSNA

Cessna Campus Building  
Wichita, Kansas

### 2:20 P.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: I think we should give them another hand -- they were fabulous, weren't they? (Applause.) Thank you, Tanya and Jodee. Thank you, Russ Meyer. Thank my friend, Eli Segal, for doing such a great job in getting other companies into this endeavor. Thank you, Michael Starnes, for the incredible support that the United States Chamber of Commerce has given to this effort.

I thank Secretary Glickman and Secretary Herman and Secretary Cuomo, who is not here, for the work they have done in supporting this endeavor and others like it around America. I'd also like to thank the large number, the unusually large number of public officials who are here today, proving that we come to celebrate a victory for America -- a victory of people, not party or politics, but an old-fashioned victory for American dignity and possibility, for people succeeding at work and succeeding in raising their children -- an old-fashioned reaffirmation that our American Dream is still very much alive and well if we all pitch in and do our part.

So thank you, Governor Graves, and thank you Senator Roberts and Senator Brownback, Congressman Tiahrt, Congressman Ryan, Mayor Knight and the other state officials and legislative leaders and council members who are here. I am very grateful to all of you for being here.

The sign says it's all about people, and I would like to suggest that you consider renaming the 21st Street Campus to the 21st Century Campus, because you really are an embodiment of the future America has to make. (Applause.)

Ladies and gentlemen, before I make the few remarks I'd like to make on this issue, I think it is appropriate, since it's my first appearance of the week, to just give you a brief update on the situation in Iraq. Even when I was walking through here a number of people asked me about it.

First, it's important that you understand what is at stake here. Since the end of the Gulf War, for six years, inspectors, under the authority of the United Nations, have been trying to find and destroy Saddam Hussein's capacity to threaten his neighbors and potentially others around the world with nuclear or biological or chemical weapons. They have found and destroyed more weapons of mass destruction potential in the last six years -- these quiet inspectors who no one knows -- they have destroyed more of this potential than was destroyed in the entire Gulf War, with all of the air attacks.

What they are doing matters. It matters to you, to your children and to the future, because this is a challenge we must face not just in Iraq, but throughout the world. We must not allow the 21st century to go forward under a cloud of fear that terrorists, organized criminals, drug traffickers will terrorize people with chemical and biological weapons the way the nuclear threat hung over the heads of the whole world through the last half of this century. That is what is at issue.

In his defiance of international community, Saddam Hussein has forced the withdrawal of the inspectors. Now, I am trying to settle this issue peacefully. But our diplomatic efforts must be backed by our strong military capability. We cannot rule out any options. But the bottom line is, we have to understand this. It is essential that those inspectors go back to work. The safety of the children of the world depends upon it. And I ask for your support. (Applause.)

I told Russ Meyer this morning that before I got my present job I spent a lot of time flying around the farmland and the mountains of Arkansas in Cessna airplanes. And it occurs to me that for a long time now Cessna has helped a lot of people take to the air in your planes. Today, we come to celebrate Cessna's efforts to help people fly higher all by themselves. And it is a truly remarkable thing.

This program, the partnership between Cessna and HUD, the Labor Department, the city of Wichita, the state of Kansas, provides training because people need it to get good jobs; provides child care -- and, by the way, I got to visit the child care facility today, so in addition to my model airplane, I have a logo constructed giraffe. (Laughter.) And I think if it's all the same to you, I'll put them both up in the Oval Office so people can see what's going on here. (Applause.)

It provides temporary housing, recognizing that a lot of people who have been poor and who have children and don't have transportation to go a long way to work. And, most important, it provides a job. Every company in America ought to take notice of what Cessna is doing. It's a model for the nation. It proves once again that the best social program ever devised is a job -- a good job with dignity that allows people to support their children.

Six years ago when I ran for president I wanted to restore what I always thought was the basic bargain in America that everybody had a right to an opportunity in life if they exercised the personal responsibility that goes along with it. That is the only way we can keep the American Dream alive in the 21st century for everyone, and it's the only way we can continue to lead the world for peace and freedom. In the end, it's the only way we can come together across all the differences in our increasingly diverse nation.

In the last 5 years, as Secretary Glickman said, the American people have made a lot of progress toward restoring that basic bargain. Unemployment is the lowest in 24 years. The deficit has been cut by 92 percent, and now that the balanced budget law is triggering, it will be even balanced soon, for the first time in a generation. We see the lowest crime rate in 24 years, the biggest drop in welfare rolls ever, incomes rising and poverty dropping, the environment improving as the economy advances -- something a lot of people didn't think was possible. And families are getting more support not only in work, but in raising their children and educating them and in meeting all their obligations.

So there is a sense of confidence in this country that you can feel in this room today that we really can make America work for everybody again. You have earned that confidence -- you and all the America people -- through hard work, a vision for the future, and a willingness to embrace new ideas for new times.

But I will say again, as many on the program have said before, if we're going to make America everything that we want it to be, everybody has got to have the chance at the brass ring in life. And we know that if our free enterprise system is going to work we're going to have to be able to train people for the areas where there are job shortages, where, by and large, are areas that pay more.

You already heard our chamber president talk about the shortage of truck drivers. Whatever it's worth, when I was governor, I paid to train a bunch of them and I'm proud of it. And we're going to get on that and see what we can do.

We have literally hundreds of thousands of openings in computer-related jobs in America -- literally. You've got people out here dying to go to work, and jobs over here and a mishmash between them because they

haven't done what Cessna has done. Either the training is not there or the child care is not there or the transportation is not there. There's something keeping people who are dying to do their part from getting there.

So that's why we're here to celebrate. The main reason I showed up, apart from the sheer satisfaction of it and the joy, is that sometimes when I show up it gets enough publicity that people find out what you're doing. I don't care if they hear what I say, I want them to see what you're doing so other people will do it. (Applause.)

Now, when I took office I had already been involved with this whole issue of welfare reform for a long time. I started -- I became seriously concerned about this in 1980 when I realized what a problem it was. And over the years I served as governor of my state I spent quite a bit of time in welfare offices. I spent a lot of time talking to people who had been on public assistance. I spent a lot of time talking to employers who tried to hire people and when it didn't work to try to find out why it didn't work out. And I think that I have learned a fair amount about it and every good thing I've learned was confirmed here today.

It was obvious to me that if we were going to ever break the cycle of dependence in America we had to change our approach, and we had to change our idea about what the role of government is. Some people thought that it was inevitable that a certain number of people are always going to be poor and in difficult circumstances. That may be true -- misfortune happens to a certain number of people, and nearly for all of us misfortune will happen to us in some way or another over the course of our lives. But that doesn't mean that the answer was just to keep the status quo, because the status quo wasn't working -- giving people a check that didn't even keep up with inflation was not working. Neither was neglect an option.

So our governing philosophy has been to try to create the conditions for good economy and then give people the tools to make the most of their own lives, and whenever possible, to work in partnership with the private sector. In the first couple of years I was in office we did that by giving over 40 states permission to try their own hand at moving people from welfare to work.

Eventually, we were able to agree -- the Republicans and the Democrats together by an overwhelming majority in the Congress -- to reform the present welfare system, saying that everybody who can work, must work; but also providing support for employers who were willing to hire welfare recipients, maintaining government support for children's health care and nutrition where necessary, providing extra help to communities with very high unemployment rates and, I think probably most important of all, giving the states some more help to provide adequate child care when people are working for employers that are much smaller than Cessna and perhaps not able to provide that on their own.

The budget I signed into law last summer included \$3 billion for welfare-to-work programs, increased tax incentives for businesses to hire people off welfare. So we changed the role of government. But that's only the first step. We also have to change the role of the private sector. And, again, I cannot say enough about your CEO and all the leaders of this company, all up and down, everybody who has been involved in this program, because you have shown what has to be done.

We know that almost all the jobs in America are in the private sector. I'm very proud of the fact that way over 90 percent of the new jobs created in America in the last five years have been in the private sector. The capacity to train people for the jobs that are needed in a given place is in the private sector. But most of all, the necessary vision, mind and heart to do the job are here. That's why we started the Welfare to Work Partnership. And I asked my friend, Eli Segal, who left a very successful business career, first of all, to help us start our national service program, AmeriCorps, to head up this Welfare to Work Partnership.

Last May, we started with 105 companies at the White House who said they would be a part of this. They pledged to enlist a thousand companies between May and November. It's November. Now, how have they done? In six months, more than 2,500 companies in America have pledged to hire welfare recipients.

(Applause.) These companies have over 5 million employees. Some of them are big, like Cessna; 24 of them are in the biggest hundred companies in America. But 75 percent of them are small businesses. We need all of these companies.

In addition to that, Eli's got an advisory board of governors which includes 10 Democratic governors, 10 Republican governors. Again, this is not about politics or party, this is about people. This has to be an American crusade. More and more businesses are realizing that this can be a good thing not only for our families and our country, but for businesses as well.

And again, let me say, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce launching a campaign to convince every chamber in the country other join the effort is the big next step, because you heard Russ say, we've got 2,500 companies; when we get 10,000 we'll really be talking turkey and we'll be doing something that will make a big dent in this nationwide.

I am delighted that we've had almost 2 million people move off the welfare rolls since the welfare reform law passed, almost 4 million people in the last five years. But there are a lot more folks out there, and we have to do it. We are going to strengthen the work requirements of welfare reform, but we need to strengthen the support we give to people to meet those work requirements.

Let me just say in closing that I think it was obvious to anybody who was here today that the most popular speakers were Tanya and Jodee. (Applause.) What I want to say to you is, I've been all over the country and I've met a lot of people who had a setback in life, many of them have terribly situations at home, almost every one of them passionately devoted to the welfare of their children, who thought they would be stuck on welfare forever, and somehow they made it out.

And the real idea behind all of this is, if some people can make it but everybody wants to make it, it's up to those of us who have made it, as Russ said, to create a system where everybody who wants to has a shot. (Applause.) Because it's important that we understand, while Tanya and Jodee are remarkable people -- and I might add, such good speakers that they might consider public office as a career option -- (laughter) -- they are not alone. Their stories are mirrored by -- there is a story in every one of these graduates who stood up here today. When they all stood up and we clapped, every one of them has got a story like their two stories. And what you have to know is, every person out there in America who is in a difficult situation has also got a story and a heart and a mind. And most of them aren't in a program like this now and aren't even close to it.

That's why we're here. If you liked what you saw when they spoke, you would love it if everybody with that story could be standing before a microphone in the community in which they live making the same speech. That is what we're here to ensure. And thanks to Cessna, we've got a lot better chance than we had before.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

**END 2:37 P.M. CST**