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**Governor's Remarks at the
Work Not Welfare Announcement
State Capitol
May 27, 1993**

TODAY, I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE A REVOLUTIONARY WELFARE REFORM INITIATIVE THAT WE WILL ASK THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION TO APPROVE AS A PILOT PROJECT IN TWO WISCONSIN COUNTIES.

THIS INITIATIVE DOES NOT REFORM WELFARE. IT REPLACES WELFARE.

IT DOES NOT ENCOURAGE WELFARE RECIPIENTS TO WORK. IT REQUIRES THEM TO WORK.

IT DOES NOT DISCOURAGE WELFARE DEPENDENCY. IT ENDS WELFARE DEPENDENCY.

FIFTY-NINE YEARS AGO, PRESIDENT FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT DESCRIBED WELFARE AS "A SUBTLE DESTROYER OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT." F-D-R CALLED WELFARE A "NARCOTIC" WHICH, OVER TIME, "INDUCES SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DISINTEGRATION."

UNFORTUNATELY, OUR EXPERIENCE WITH WELFARE OVER THE GENERATIONS HAS PROVEN PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S REMARKS TO BE TRUE.

OUR INNOVATIVE PROPOSAL WILL MAKE WELFARE WHAT IT WAS MEANT TO BE: A TEMPORARY HAND UP ... NOT A PERMANENT HAND OUT.

OUR PROPOSAL IS CALLED WORK NOT WELFARE. WORK, NOT WELFARE, IS WHAT PEOPLE WANT AND NEED.

THE WORK NOT WELFARE INITIATIVE EMBRACES TWO FUNDAMENTAL VALUES:

FIRST, THAT EVERYONE WHO IS ABLE TO SHOULD WORK FOR THEIR PAY ... AND SECOND, THAT NO ONE SHOULD REMAIN DEPENDENT ON WELFARE.

LOOK AT HOW THE CURRENT AFDC SYSTEM WORKS.

WE PAY PEOPLE, YET DO NOT REQUIRE WORK.

WE PAY PEOPLE FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD -- THERE IS NO TIME-LIMIT TO WELFARE -- AND IN RETURN FOR THIS OPEN-ENDED PAYMENT, WE EXPECT LITTLE.

WE NEED A NEW APPROACH. WE NEED A WELFARE SYSTEM THAT REWARDS POSITIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR.

OUR WORK NOT WELFARE INITIATIVE DOES THAT. FIRST, IT REQUIRES ALL ABLE-BODIED WELFARE RECIPIENTS TO WORK IN EXCHANGE FOR BENEFITS. IT'S VERY SIMPLE: IF YOU ARE ASKED TO WORK AND YOU DON'T WORK ... YOU DON'T GET PAID.

FOR TOO LONG OUR WELFARE SYSTEM HAS IGNORED AND EVEN UNDERMINED THE VALUE OF WORK ... ITS VALUE TO US AND TO OUR CHILDREN.

OUR WORK NOT WELFARE INITIATIVE ONCE AGAIN ACKNOWLEDGES THE HUMAN VALUE, THE DIGNITY, AND THE CONSTRUCTIVE POWER OF GOOD, BASIC, HARD WORK.

SECOND, IT ENDS CASH BENEFITS AFTER 24 MONTHS. THIS MEANS THAT IF YOU'RE ON WELFARE, YOU HAVE TWO YEARS TO PREPARE FOR WORK, FIND A JOB AND BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT. NO MORE LONG-TERM DEPENDENCY. NO MORE "WELFARE CAREERS."

CLEAR? NO NONSENSE? YOU BET. BUT IT'S EXACTLY WHAT MANY WELFARE RECIPIENTS TELL US THEY NEED AND WANT.

IN THE WORK NOT WELFARE EXPERIMENT, WISCONSIN WILL OFFER WELFARE RECIPIENTS A JOB. AT THE SAME TIME, WE WILL EXPECT RESPONSIBILITY AND EFFORT ON THE PART OF RECIPIENTS. TIME WILL BE OF THE ESSENCE ... AND THAT WILL BE THE DIFFERENCE.

WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT HERE IS A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT AMONG GOVERNMENT, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND THOSE WHO NEED HELP.

GOVERNMENT'S SIDE OF THE BARGAIN IS THIS PLEDGE:

WE WILL PROVIDE TIME-LIMITED CASH ASSISTANCE;
WE WILL PROVIDE EDUCATION AND TRAINING;
WE WILL PROVIDE CHILD CARE;

WE WILL PROVIDE HEALTH CARE;
AND WE WILL PROVIDE HELP IN FINDING JOBS.

THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN THE PILOT COUNTIES WILL AGREE TO PROVIDE JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND MENTORS FOR WELFARE RECIPIENTS STRIVING TO BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT.

THE RECIPIENTS MUST TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS. KEEPING IN MIND, THE GOVERNMENT BENEFITS HAVE AN END POINT.

ALL OF THE PARTNERS IN THIS CONTRACT WILL BE WINNERS.

GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS GAIN NEW TAXPAYERS AND NEW CUSTOMERS.

PEOPLE WHO ARE MIRED IN WELFARE DEPENDENCY GAIN NEW PURPOSE AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO ESCAPE POVERTY.

AND A WHOLE GENERATION OF CHILDREN WILL BENEFIT ENORMOUSLY BY HAVING PARENTS WHO ARE SELF-SUFFICIENT, PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

YOU SAW THE DATA WE RELEASED TWO WEEKS AGO ILLUSTRATING HOW WISCONSIN STANDS ALONE WITH A TRACK RECORD OF REDUCING ITS AFDC CASELOAD DURING THE PAST SIX YEARS.

THIS INITIATIVE WILL BE A NEW CHAPTER IN OUR ON-GOING EFFORT TO MOVE RECIPIENTS OFF DEPENDENCY INTO JOBS WITH A FUTURE.

THE PEOPLE OF WISCONSIN NEED WORK, NOT WELFARE.

PRESIDENT CLINTON HAS TALKED ABOUT ELIMINATING WELFARE AS WE KNOW IT, AND MOVING TOWARD A TIME-LIMITED SYSTEM.

BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WON'T BE READY WITH ANY LEGISLATION UNTIL LATE THIS YEAR ... AND CONGRESSIONAL ACTION WON'T COME BEFORE NEXT YEAR.

I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD WAIT. WITHIN THREE WEEKS, I WILL ASK SECRETARY SHALALA FOR APPROVAL OF A WAIVER TO IMPLEMENT THIS PROGRAM. AND I WILL ASK THE LEGISLATURE TO CONSIDER THE ENABLING LEGISLATION.

SECRETARY WHITBURN WILL NOW EXPLAIN HOW THIS PILOT WILL

Source: Marquette University Libraries; Tommy G. Thompson Collection; Series 2:
Gubernatorial Speeches.

OPERATE.