

**FLOTUS STATEMENTS
& SPEECHES**

1/22/97-7/14/97

SPEECHES 1/97-7/97

1/22/97 NARAL Luncheon
1/25/97 "Taking Charge of Your TV" viewing project
1/30/97 Briefing w/ Sec. Rubin & USAID's Atwood
2/3/97 Microcredit Summit
2/6/97 Nat'l Prayer Luncheon
2/7/97 Education Awards Ceremony
2/10/97 Working Mom' Magazine, E. Room
2/12/97 Breast Cancer Prevention Event, W.H.
2/18/97 Chicago's Children's Museum
2/19/97 Woman's Employment Network Luncheon
2/21/97 5th Meeting of WHO Global Comm. On Women's Health
2/25/97 "Creative America"--/Arts and Hum. Committee
3/4/97 DC School Construction Grant Announcement, WDC
3/5/97 Pediatric AIDS Foundation-Elizabeth Glasier Award
3/12/97 Int'l Women's Day, State Dep't
3/20/97 Univ. Cape Town
3/21/97 Women's Roundtable, Harare (open)
3/22/97 Women's Roundtable, Harare (close)
3/22/97 Dorothy Duncan Center for the Blind, Harare
3/22/97 Kuwandzana Polyclinic, Harare
3/22/97 Zambuko Trust, Harare
3/28/97 Nile Center, Kumpala, Uganda
4/3/97 Society for Research in Child Dev'p, Sheraton WDC
4/10/97 Visit and Learn Program at Cardozo H.S., WDC
4/14/97 Early Childhood Development and Learning Conf.
4/16/97 Prescription for Reading Announcement, WDC
4/17/97 Press Briefing on WH Conference on Early Childhood Dev'p
4/18/97 Women's Leadership Forum
4/21/97 Corporate Council on Africa, Chantilly VA
4/22/97 65th Anniv. Of Folger Shakespeare Library
4/29/97 University of Louisville
4/29/97 President's Summit on America's Future
5/10/97 Microenterprise Summit, Bridgetown, Barbados
5/27/97 Univ. Amsterdam, The Neth.
6/13/97 Banneker High School
6/14/97 Ohio Univ. Commencement
6/16/97 Foreign Aid Briefing
6/18/97 Friends of art and Preservation in Embassies
7/1/97 Washington Post Principal Leadership Group
7/11/97 Vital Voices Speech- Vienna, Austria
7/14/97 Salzburg Seminar

1/22/97 NARAL Luncheon

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

January 22, 1997

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY
AT NATIONAL ABORTION RIGHTS
ACTION LEAGUE LUNCHEON

MRS. CLINTON: I am pleased to be here with all of you. And I know that it took a little longer to get into the room than usual, but let me reassure you about the events of this morning. We do not know what the facts are, but law enforcement, as the President said this morning, is working hard to get the bottom of it, and it does not, at least so far as we know at this time, appear to be anything serious that should concern us.

I am very pleased to be here for a number of reasons. One is to join all of you in honoring Robin Chandler Duke. We will hear more about her as the program goes on. But I wanted to thank her publicly for her tireless work on behalf of family planning here at home and particularly internationally, on her advocacy of safe motherhood and other issues critical to women, children and families. She has always understood that these are not marginal concerns. They relate to political and economic progress, human rights, and peace and prosperity here in our country and around the world.

So I wanted to raise my voice with all of yours in commending her for all of her work in raising awareness about family planning and her many other contributions that she has already made and that I know she will continue to make into the future. (Applause.)

I also wanted to come and recognize and thank my friend, Nancy Rubin, for her energy, her wisdom and all of her efforts on behalf of causes relating to women and families. She is a clear and articulate voice for women's rights around the world and has worked to strengthen education, economic opportunities, legal protections and political rights, and has helped from one corner of the world to the next to bring women's issues to the forefront of international and national concerns. (Applause.)

And I know that I speak for all of us and for many others who are not here in thanking Kate Michelman for over a decade of service leading this organization and doing so much to promote and protect a women's right to choose. It has not been an easy mission. And she has

continued to speak up and speak out even in difficult times. And, Kate, we want to thank you for that. (Applause).

I'm delighted that the Vice President and Tipper Gore will be here shortly, representing the administration, and that both of them will address you. I literally am dropping in, wanting to be here today, but I have a previous engagement and have to be New York this evening, I think -- I lose track of where I am and where I'm going and where I'll be. (Laughter.)

But I wanted to lend my voice to the Vice President's and Tipper's and to all of yours in thanking you for your work. And particularly, I wanted to thank the members of Congress who are here and other elected officials for remaining steadfast in their support of a woman's right to choose.

This is never an easy issue, and anyone who thinks they have the ultimate truth on it is always going to be wrong. This is a very hard issue. And in the next years, I hope that we will be able to find ways of increasing dialogue, in working together with people of good faith who do not share extremism as their rallying cry, to try to understand how we can continue the progress that has been made in the last four years in decreasing the number of abortions, decreasing teen pregnancy, in working to give women opportunities to make the choices that are best for them and their families.

And I have no illusions about the difficulty of that. But I also have no illusions that there is any other route to take. This is an issue that will be with us because of the strong feelings. And I think that my husband's formulation of it years ago is still the right one, that abortion should be legal, safe and rare. We have worked hard in the last -- (applause) -- in the last four years to maintain legality and safety and to begin to put into place attitudes and values and policies that are beginning to work to make abortion rare.

But that will mean we also must speak out on behalf of family planning here and around the world -- (applause) -- on behalf of educational opportunities for young women and young men so they know they have better choices and that they should postpone childbearing or even confronting the issue of abortion. It means that we have to have good, comprehensive health care services available to all people in our country so that they have access to the same information that those of us who are fortunate do. (Applause.)

I was reminded on my way over here of several of the experiences that I have had in the last four years traveling on behalf of our country. I was in Brazil, a maternal hospital -- I wrote about it in my book and I talked about it. It stays in my mind because half the admissions were for the joy of giving birth, and half the admissions were for complications resulting from self-induced or back-alley abortions. And the Minister of Health in a public meeting with me said, we want to give poor women the same information and access to family planning that well-to-do women have always had in our country. (Applause.) That should be our goal not only here but also in our foreign policy.

I also had the rather unique experience within a year of traveling to China and speaking

out against policies of forced abortion and sterilization where the government made the choice for women, and traveling to Romania that under the previous communist regime had a policy of enforcing birth -- five children per woman. And I spoke with women who told me of every month being taken as part of their work units to local hospitals where they were forcefully examined to determine whether or not they were pregnant so they could then be monitored by the secret police to be sure they had the child.

Two extremes -- government, on the one hand, saying you cannot have children; government, on the other hand, saying you must have children. What we have tried to do in promoting choice is to say that this most difficult of all intimate choices for women and men must be made by the individual in the privacy of her consultation with her conscience, her God, her family, her physician -- (applause.)

Thank you for continuing to try to get that message across. Please join in helping us make these difficult decisions rarer. Help us support women in all their needs. Help us support families.

And I appreciate greatly the devotion and dedication that so many of you have given to this over the years, and look forward to working with you into the future. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

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