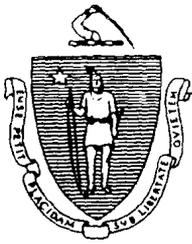


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THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

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Remarks of Governor William F. Weld

Before the Massachusetts Newspaper Publishers Association

Boston

Thursday, December 10, 1992

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

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Massachusetts Newspaper Publishers Association

Thursday, December 10, 1992

Thank you, Charlie, and good afternoon, everybody.

I've been reading what you all have had to say about my administration over the past two years, so I'm pleased to have this opportunity to return the favor.

I do read papers from all over the state, and your editorials do not go unnoticed in my office.

I also enjoy the distinct coverage that comes with each paper. I can just imagine the various headlines if a major earthquake should hit Boston.

The Boston Herald's banner headline might read: "Quake 'N Shake!"

The Boston Globe's would read: "City Roiled by Tremor -- Flynn Blames Weld"

The Springfield Union News might say: "Quake Hits Bay State -- Western Mass Left Out Again"

And many of you other papers across the state might play it this way: "Mayors Decry Local Aid Cuts -- See 'Boston Earthquake' page D 23."

You asked me here to give a mid-term report of the Weld-Cellucci Administration, but to borrow a line from Bob Strauss, before I begin my speech, I have something to say:

I have today vetoed the 13 percent pay raise for state employees, and I am going to fight this measure right down to the last vote.

As you all know, we're in a period of limited resources, and the 13 percent pay raise approved by the Legislature is simply too costly. This 13 percent pay raise would cost the state \$250 million and jeopardize our fiscal stability, and that fiscal stability is nothing less than the cornerstone for job creation and job expansion in the private sector.

Paul Cellucci and I are not opposed to giving deserving state employees a raise. The vast majority have worked hard and

deserve one. But we also feel, strongly, that any raise must be tied to a system that identifies productive employees and recognizes exemplary performance.

We have offered, and are willing to accept, a 5 percent pay raise to state employees if we can also implement a performance evaluation system that would serve as the basis for future pay increases.

There is another issue at work here. We in state government should concern ourselves with everyone who is hurting in Massachusetts, not just state employees -- 40 percent of whom, incidentally, received pay hikes through step increases in each of the past four years.

In my judgment, we should focus not just on the 64,000 people whose paychecks come from the state government, but on the 282,000 people in Massachusetts who don't have any paychecks, who are out of work and looking for jobs.

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Maintaining our fiscal stability is critical to our ability to do anything else in the years to come. We feel that working with the Legislature, we have made major strides in balancing three budgets, curtailing state spending, and earning a triple-upgrade in our bond rating.

By lowering the personal income tax rate, by repealing the sales tax on services, by cutting the deeds excise tax in half, by phasing out the estate tax, and by implementing the nation's most generous tax credit for Research and Development, we have also made this Commonwealth a far more attractive state for employers.

And we've seen some dividends, such as Digital's \$450 million Alpha plant in Hudson, Genetics Institute's new \$55 million manufacturing facility in Andover, Cambridge Biotech's \$28 million plant in Shrewsbury, and Genzyme's \$75 million investment here in Boston. These companies were wooed heavily by other states, but they stayed here in part because they no longer view state government as an adversary.

Although there is much more to be done, I'm pleased by the progress we've made on the fiscal and economic front, and I'm also proud that many of our administration's initiatives aren't just cold statistics.

Our administration has signed into law bills allowing dangerousness to be considered in bail decisions, creating a

domestic violence registry, and codifying the crime of stalking. These laws are having a real and immediate impact on the lives of real people. Because of these changes, a woman does not have to worry about being beaten by the very man who assaulted her the previous night.

On another criminal justice front, I'm proud of the boot camp for young offenders that we created down in Bridgewater, just as the 23 young men who graduated from the first class last Friday have gained a newfound sense of pride and direction in their own lives.

In selecting new judges, we have looked beyond the traditional "old-boy network" to make the judiciary truly representative. Half of our judicial appointments have been women. Our hope and belief is that women who seek justice can be met with greater sensitivity, that they will feel more comfortable and understood when, for instance, they appear before a judge to request a restraining order.

Our belief in diversity extends to all levels of state government. Of our 11 Cabinet secretaries, five are women, the highest proportion in the country. These Cabinet leaders work every day on toxic waste disposal, labor issues, insurance and public housing reform -- not the stereotypical "women's issues."

A woman who is open about being a lesbian now presides at the Boston Municipal Court, and a gay man heads the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

And it was an especially proud day when we appointed Ralph Martin to be the new Suffolk County District Attorney. Here is both a skillful and tough prosecutor and also a man with the ability and desire to heal wounds in every neighborhood of the county.

I'm proud that our administration has had an impact on other parts of society. As Shelly Cohen was nice enough to point out in the Herald yesterday, our hospital consolidation moved hundreds of patients from archaic institutions to smaller, community-based residences where their food, their facilities, and most of all, their quality of life, has been categorically improved. We may have saved some money through this privatization, but we also gave these patients far more dignity in their daily lives.

Likewise, we aren't privatizing 16 ice-skating rinks across the state for reasons of economy, but so kids can play hockey and take skating lessons year-round.

Passage of the Watershed Protection Act, and reform of 21E legislation, are not imponderable regulatory changes to be argued by lawyers. They are limiting further encroachment on our water supply and enabling towns and private developers to clean-up hazardous waste sites and put them back to productive use.

These are all important initiatives from the past two years, but it is important we continue moving this state, and our economy, forward. With nine percent unemployment, we face an obvious challenge in the short-term: we must get people back to work. And with the global economy in constant transition, we must answer the long-term challenge to make Massachusetts globally competitive.

The 8-point jobs plan I filed back in September deals with both issues. It aims to help Massachusetts companies restructure, to help our Commonwealth counter competition from other states, to encourage companies to enter global markets, to encourage new investment here in Massachusetts, and, most of all, to put people back to work.

Down the road, the companies that will succeed and bring jobs here will be the ones whose products and services have significant global appeal. That is why I have led trade missions to East Asia, to Europe, to Israel, and to Mexico, so that Massachusetts is participating actively in the deep structural transition of the global economy rather than merely adapting and responding to it.

And, it is worth noting, we remain strong in many traditional industries, such as textiles, but they, too, will depend on technological advances for survival.

Our vision for a vibrant Massachusetts also motivates our concern for our state's public education system. Paul Cellucci and I remain dedicated to passing an education reform bill, perhaps even before the year is out, and we'll be meeting with the chairmen of the Education Committee next week.

Our vision for reforming public education involves changing the system. We do so not for the sake of change, but for the sake of each child who enters a school in this state. Too many children are not getting the opportunities they deserve, and a school year which should be rich with learning is often squandered.

Our efforts to improve education in Massachusetts are geared both to broaden the horizons of our students, and also to give them the ability to fill the high-skill, high-wage jobs our economy will be creating.

I'm also a fan of school choice, and parents in districts which are already participating in our school choice program say that, by and large, schools in both receiving and sending districts have vastly improved their responsiveness to students and parents.

You as publishers can appreciate the benefits of a little competition. It's a truism in your business that competition within a city between two newspapers tends to elevate both papers. Likewise, our schools.

Our efforts to improve our economy and our education system hold little meaning if the people of this state fear for their safety.

The Boston Globe recently ran a story about the fear of violence and sense of vulnerability expressed by children at a middle school in Dorchester. It was not the words of the journalist, but of the children themselves that was most moving and chilling. One child wrote a poem:

"We are tired of going to kids' funerals," she wrote. "Our parents are scared to let us out of their sight in fear that we might be next...Please let us grow up and enjoy life."

A loss of faith born at such a young age can only be expected to grow and spread to all institutions, public and private. And when even our youngest citizens have lost that most basic faith -- when they don't feel safe, when they distrust the courts to provide justice swiftly and fairly -- that's a call to action, folks.

Paul and I believe that providing for the common safety is first among equals in any hierarchy of government's core functions. That is why we are proposing a major overhaul of the state's sentencing statutes. Our "truth in sentencing" reforms get us away from the current system where the actual time served usually bears no resemblance to the sentence imposed.

The current practice has undermined the credibility of the entire criminal justice system in the eyes of the public. Victims are rightly cynical when they have to guess what a ten-year sentence "really means."

As it stands now, our sentencing system couldn't be less adequate if it had been designed by a defense lawyer, or even a criminal. You get 12.5 days off per month just for showing up at the prison gate. We would put an end to that. Under our proposal for sentencing reform, a ten-year sentence would really mean a decade in jail.

We also need comprehensive court reform if we are to restore faith in our criminal justice system. Our courts are overcrowded, decaying physically, and burdened by inefficient management.

These are complex problems that took root over several decades. To solve them, all of us in government must be willing to compromise.

As Governor, I am prepared to say that the authority to appoint clerk-magistrates rests appropriately not with the Governor, but with the courts themselves. I would call upon the Legislature to commit itself to the proposition that court resources will be allocated on the basis of management necessity and not ancient political battles. And I call upon the courts to assign judges on the basis of merit and not seniority.

We owe these reforms to our citizens. It is they who have empowered the government and invested their faith in government to provide protection and resolve disputes. When that faith is answered by outcomes and procedures that no reasonable person could deem just, we have to do more.

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These are all areas where we hope to see real achievement in the months to come. They also are areas where I know that many of you have much to say. You are the ones most attuned to the varied pulses of your communities, and believe me, what you have to say does influence what we do.

Many of you have supported some of the reforms we've been trying to accomplish, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you. To the extent that you agree with us as we move forward, your support will be critical, especially given the new political realities on Beacon Hill following the November elections. There'll be times when you disagree with me, and I'm sure you'll let me know that, too.

In return, I'll promise you this much -- I'll do my best to give you a good story to cover for the next two years.

Thank you.