

it lets more middle-income Americans make tax-deductible contributions to Individual Retirement Accounts and withdraw from them, penalty-free, for the costs of education and training, health care, first-time home-buying, long periods of unemployment, or the care of an ill parent.

The fourth element of my Middle Class Bill of Rights—not included in this legislation—is the GI Bill for America’s Workers, which consolidates 70 Federal training programs and creates a more effective system for learning new skills and finding better jobs for adults and youth. Legislation for this proposal is being developed in cooperation with the Congress.

If enacted, the Middle Class Bill of Rights will help keep the American Dream alive for everyone willing to take responsibility for themselves, their families, and their futures. And it will not burden our children with more debt. In my fiscal 1996 budget, we have found enough

savings not only to pay for this tax bill, but also to provide another \$81 billion in deficit reduction between 1996 and 2000.

This legislation will restore fairness to our tax system, let middle-income families share in our economic prosperity, encourage Americans to prepare for the future, and help ensure that the United States moves into the 21st Century still the strongest nation in the world. I urge the Congress to take prompt and favorable action on this legislation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 13, 1995.

NOTE: A fact sheet on the “Middle-Class Bill of Rights Tax Relief Act of 1995” was also released by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Legislation To Increase the Minimum Wage

February 13, 1995

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit for your immediate consideration and enactment the “Working Wage Increase Act of 1995.”

This draft bill would amend the Fair Labor Standards Act to increase the minimum wage in two 45 cents steps—from the current rate of \$4.25 an hour to \$4.70 an hour on July 4, 1995, and to \$5.15 an hour after July 3, 1996. The pattern of the proposed increase is identical to that of the last increase, which passed the Congress with a broad bipartisan majority and was signed by President Bush in 1989. The first increment of the proposal simply restores the minimum wage to its real value following the change enacted in 1989.

If the Congress does not act now, the minimum wage will fall to its lowest real level in 40 years. That would dishonor one of the great promises of American life—that everyone who works hard can earn a living wage. More than 11 million workers would benefit under this proposal, and a full-time, year-round worker at the minimum wage would get a \$1,800 raise—the

equivalent of 7 months of groceries for the average family.

To reform the Nation’s welfare system, we should make work pay, and this legislation would help achieve that result. It would offer a raise to families that are working hard, but struggling to make ends meet. Most individuals earning the minimum wage are adults, and the average worker affected by this proposal brings home half of the family’s earnings. Numerous empirical studies indicate that an increase in the minimum wage of the magnitude proposed would not have a significant impact on employment. The legislation would ensure that those who work hard and play by the rules can live with the dignity they have earned.

I urge the Congress to take prompt and favorable action on this legislation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 13, 1995.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Zhelyu Zhelev of Bulgaria February 13, 1995

The President. I'd like to tell you how delighted I am to welcome President Zhelev and the representatives of his government here. The United States supports the democratic and economic transformation of his country, and we're looking forward to having this visit and then signing a declaration of principles and a common agenda together. We look forward to working together. And we're very, very pleased to have him and the Ambassador and leaders of the Government here.

Q. Is Bosnia at the top of your agenda, and the lifting of the embargo? Any move toward that?

The President. Well, I imagine we'll discuss that and a number of other things. But we just started.

Q. What is this declaration of principles? Is it just a friendship kind of thing?

The President. It sort of—it outlines the basic principles that will govern our relationship and also sets forward an agenda for how we can work together so that we can support their successes, which is something we want to do.

Q. Thank you.

Q. Life in the old corral.

The President. What did she say?

The Vice President. She said, "Life in the old corral." [Laughter]

The President. I don't know; you haven't stayed rounded up too well, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International]. This corral analogy has got its limits. [Laughter]

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

The President. We are honored to have President Zhelev and the leaders of the Bulgarian Government here today, and I look forward to our conversations and to continuing the support of the United States for the democratic and economic transformations in the country. We are also going to sign a joint declaration in a few moments, setting forth the principles and the specific agenda that we will follow in working together. And I am very, very pleased that the President and the leaders of the Government are here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:54 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Joint Statement on Relations Between the United States of America and the Republic of Bulgaria February 13, 1995

At the invitation of President Bill Clinton, President Zhelyu Zhelev visited Washington, meeting with President Clinton at the White House on February 13.

President Clinton and President Zhelev stressed the value of the close cooperation established over the past five years in maintaining regional stability and supporting Bulgaria's democratic and market economic transformation. They agreed that relations between the two countries rest on the values of democracy and human rights. President Clinton noted that the security of Bulgaria and the other Central Euro-

pean democracies is inseparably linked to that of the United States and praised Bulgaria's balanced and constructive policy in the Balkans.

Both Presidents noted the importance of continued implementation of Bulgaria's market economic reforms. In this context, they noted the need for Bulgaria to solidify its efforts at stabilization, to accelerate implementation of privatization and to complete the legal and regulatory conditions necessary to a market economy. President Clinton offered continued U.S. assistance to support Bulgaria's efforts in this direction. As part of the planned 1995 \$30 million