

ing to make. The great American middle class, which basically rose more or less evenly with the poor and the rich in income from the end of World War II to the late seventies—everybody rose together about the same amount—the American middle class itself is now splitting apart, based largely on education, age, and job description. And if you don't have the skills and you're not in the place—in the workplace, where you can hook into one of these groups that is growing, then you tend to work harder every year for lower wages. That's what I'm pointing out.

So what do we try to do? In the economic plan in '93, we had one big tax cut. We cut taxes for working families with children to make sure nobody who was working 40 hours a week with children would be below the poverty line. That's what the earned-income tax credit was about. On average this year it's worth about \$1,000 in lower taxes to families of four with income of under \$26,000. Why do we do that? To reward work and family and lift people, keep trying to push people toward the middle class.

So this whole education thing—we know if our Government here can continue to follow responsible economic policies, we can create jobs, we can have growth. But we still—that will not raise incomes. And it won't overcome this inequality, this splitting apart of the middle class.

So that's what I'm saying. The middle class mentality, which has been—what made America great, requires us to follow policies that lift everybody's income.

I will close with just one thing. I had an interview with Money Magazine the other day. Do you all know Money Magazine? It's a—and they did a readers' survey, they told me. And they said—I guess I'm jumping my interview. They'll probably be mad at me, but—[laughter]. They said that their readers said that they recognize that we have lowered the deficit, created jobs, sparked an economic recovery, and two-thirds of them were still worried about their future. Right? “Yes, you lowered the deficit, created jobs, there's an economic recovery. Am I worried? You bet I am. Why? Because of all this churning instability in the global economy.”

That is our challenge. We've got to find a way to keep the entrepreneurship, keep the growth going, but lift the middle class folks that are good people that have been left behind.

That's why I'm glad to see some of the non-traditional students in the community college. That means that they're going to make the transfer from the middle class that might be left behind to the middle class that's surging ahead. And we need more of that, which is why we don't need to be in a position of reducing our commitment to education at the end of this century when the next century will trigger opportunity to education more than ever before.

Thank you very much. I have to go. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Welfare Reform

March 23, 1995

I want to applaud Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives for approving an amendment this afternoon to require States to deny drivers and professional licenses to deadbeat parents who refuse to pay child support. This tough provision was a central part of the welfare reform plan my administration introduced last year and sends a clear signal: No parent in America has a right to walk away from the responsibility to raise their children.

I congratulate the sponsor of the amendment, Representative Marge Roukema (R-NJ), as well as Representative Barbara Kennelly (D-CT) and other Members who have worked across party lines to make tough child support enforcement a central part of welfare reform. With this amendment, the House welfare reform legislation now includes every major child support pillar of our welfare reform plan, which offered the toughest possible child support enforcement measures ever put forward.

These actions on child support enforcement prove that welfare reform can and must be a bipartisan issue. Unfortunately, the House Republican bill still does not offer the kind of real welfare reform that Americans in both parties expect. Welfare reform must be tough on

work and tough on deadbeat parents, not tough on children.

I look forward to working with Republicans and Democrats in both Houses of Congress to enact real reform that makes work and responsibility a way of life.

Statement on Senate Action on the Line-Item Veto

March 23, 1995

The Senate tonight has taken another step toward passing strong line-item veto legislation. I hope the House and Senate will now get to-

gether quickly to resolve their differences and pass the strongest possible bill.

The sooner such a bill reaches my desk, the sooner I can take further steps to cut the deficit.

Message to the Congress on Trade With the West Bank and the Gaza Strip

March 17, 1995

To the Congress of the United States:

I am writing to inform you of my intent to designate the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a beneficiary of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). The GSP program, which offers duty-free access to the U.S. market, was originally authorized by the Trade Act of 1974.

I have carefully considered the criteria identified in sections 501 and 502 of the Trade Act of 1974. In light of these criteria, I have determined that it is appropriate to extend GSP benefits to the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

This notice is submitted in accordance with section 502(a)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 17, 1995.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 24. The related proclamation of March 17 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Welfare Reform

March 24, 1995

At a time when so many Americans without regard to party agree on the need for welfare reform, it's a shame the House of Representatives could not produce a real welfare reform plan that would promote work and responsibility and attract broad bipartisan support. I am disappointed that instead of joining in a real, bipartisan effort to move people from welfare to work, a narrow partisan Republican majority

passed a bill that is weak on work and tough on children.

I am determined to work with Republicans and Democrats in Congress to produce the kind of welfare reform Americans, regardless of party affiliation, want and expect. To end welfare as we know it, we must be tough on work and tough on deadbeat parents not tough on children.