

less choice, and have no Medicare at all for Americans under 67.

I have proposed a balanced budget plan that reflects our fundamental values. It eliminates the deficit without destroying education or undermining our environment or violating our commitments to working families, poor children, or seniors. It gives the American people a tax cut targeted to education and childrearing, and it secures Medicare and its Trust Fund, and it restrains inflation on Medicaid without imposing new costs on seniors, threatening their independence, or destroying their dignity.

Let's be clear, of course—of course, we need to balance the budget. But we need to do it in a way that strengthens our families, enhances opportunity for Americans, and honors our obligations to our parents.

I am determined to see that people of good faith work together to find common ground in meeting this challenge.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6 p.m. on September 29 in Room 453 of the Old Executive Office Building for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 30.

Remarks in Observance of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month *October 2, 1995*

Thank you very much, Sergeant Wynn, for your remarks and for dedicating your life to this important work. Thank you, Bonnie Campbell, for doing a great job as head of the Violence Against Women Program in the Justice Department. Thank you, Attorney General Reno, for believing in this and for driving it. Thank you, Secretary Shalala, for reminding us this is a human tragedy.

Thank you, Jerry Rossi. You stood up here and you tried to convince us that you were really worried about the bottom line, and everybody who saw you knew that what you were really worried about was all those people out there, right and wrong. And every American who can see you would be proud of you and would wish that every person in business in this country would have those values and that kind of passion. Thank you so much.

And thank you, Tana Sherman, for being brave enough to tell us your story. Before we came over here, Tana and the five people who are on the back row with Bonnie Campbell all told me their stories. One of them had to have her back broken before she actually asked for help. Another waited until her oldest child was assaulted with a meat cleaver.

This is not just a woman's problem. I was glad to hear that. This is a children's problem, and it's a man's problem. And we're not doing anybody any favors, least of all the abusers, by ignoring it any longer. And I thank all these

brave women for the power of their example. And there are others in this audience who have been severely abused in domestic situations; I thank them all for having the courage to be here and for the fight they are fighting.

I'd also like to thank the Congress for the support that they gave this program a year ago and to say a special word of appreciation to the United States Senate for restoring funding for the Violence Against Women Program just last week. Thank you, Senator Leahy; thank you, Congresswoman Morella; thank you, Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren. And I have to thank my good friend Senator Joe Biden, in his absence, for all of their work on behalf of this program.

Last week we had a great week in Washington. We celebrated progress in peace in the Middle East. We celebrated the beginnings of peaceful agreements in Bosnia. I spend a whole lot of my time trying to make or keep peace, Northern Ireland, Southern Africa, Haiti, trying to get rid of the nuclear weapons that have threatened to disturb our peace profoundly and permanently. But we don't need just peace with other countries, we need peace on our streets, in our schools, and perhaps most of all, in our homes. All of us should want a peaceful world, but we know a peaceful world has to start with each of us, in our homes and at work and in our lives.

This problem has been swept under the rug for quite a long while now. It's really always

existed at some level or another. It is time to recognize that domestic violence can quickly and easily become criminal violent activity that affects us all, regardless of our race, our income, or our age, regardless of where we live or what we do.

You've heard about how it increases health costs and absenteeism and reduces the productivity of businesses. You know the most important thing is that it undermines the most important things in life; it undermines the most important institution in the world.

Most of us have been privileged to know, in greater or lesser degree, the joys of family life. And everyone who has ever been part of any family knows there's no such thing as a perfect family and they all have their problems. But there's a whole lot of difference between a family with joys and problems and a family dominated by violence and abuse.

If there is anything I could say to you today that would leave a lasting impression, I would hope it would be to echo what the fine man who introduced me said, and that is that we don't have to put up with this. We do not have to put up with this. We can do something about it. It can be changed. It can be better.

And everybody, not just the battered women but their children who suffer psychological wounds that can only be imagined and can never be fully predicted, and the abusers themselves, will be better off if we determine that we are going to put a quick, firm, rapid, unambiguous stop to every single case we find out about, as soon as we find out about it. That is what we should all leave here determined to do.

I wish the First Lady could be here today, but Hillary has to—she's going to New York, and she couldn't be here. But when we lived in Little Rock, we spent a lot of time at the shelter for battered and abused women and children. It was run by some saintly people we knew and respected. We enjoyed, if you can use that word, the time we spent there. We learned a lot. And it sort of stiffened my resolve to see this as a problem of society, not just an unfortunate thing that happens to some families on occasion, including mine.

And when we were debating the crime bill a year ago, I was so moved by the commitment that the Attorney General had and that many in the Congress had to make a bipartisan departure from national policy and say that we were actually going to single this out, that we were

going to pass a crime bill that was comprehensive and meaningful, that carried the real potential of lowering the crime rate, changing the conditions in which crime would occur. And it really was a brilliant piece of legislation. It had the assault weapons ban. It had stronger penalties for serious offenders.

You see now people are beginning to be put away for good under the "three strikes and you're out" law, and the two cases that I've seen, I'd say the law has been properly implemented. It had money for prevention, for community strategies. It had money for 100,000 police officers. We see all over the country now community policing lowering the crime rate. You do not have to put up with this; we can make this better. We can bring the crime rate down, and we can certainly reduce the rate of domestic violence.

But the Violence Against Women Act is really a peculiar part of the genius of the crime bill because of its commitment to raise to national prominence an issue that had never, ever been there before and because it combines tough sanctions against abusers with assistance to police and to prosecutors and to shelters. And I don't know—several of the people who talked with me before I came out here were emphasizing how important it is to educate and train not only the police officers but also the prosecutors and the judges. All the police can do is to bring the case to the criminal justice system. Prosecutors and the courts have to do the rest.

To make sure this act had a good chance to work, we created the Office of Violence Against Women in the Justice Department, and we named Bonnie Campbell, the former attorney general of Iowa, to head it. And we hope that we can say now that as a matter of national policy, with the support of people all across America in uniform, in women's groups, in support groups, the days of men using physical violence to control the lives of their wives, their girlfriends, and their children are over. And it is not a women's issue; it's an American issue, it's a values issue, and it is now an issue around the world.

A lot of kind things have been said about the speech that Hillary made at the women's conference in Beijing, speaking out against abuses against women and little girls in other parts of the world. But I would remind you, she also spoke out against the problem of family violence. And the Beijing conference made that

an international goal for improving the condition of women the world over. And since we had so much to do with that, we ought to say, "We've got a lot of work to do right here in the United States, and we want to lead the way to guarantee women and their children a safe life and a chance at a good, constructive family."

Again, let me say, I'm grateful to all the corporations who have worked on this. Jerry Rossi made an eloquent statement. There are many others; the GAP, Liz Claiborne, Aetna, Polaroid are among the great companies in this country who have made a difference in the way their employees are treated and the way they think about themselves and their options and their possibilities. I thank them for that.

I want to thank the Congress again—I mean the Senate, for restoring the funding. I want to say again, we will not be able to do this right unless there are police officers like Sergeant Wynn who will give themselves to this work. And I often say this in Washington—very often a national movement like this starts with someone like him, who had to live with the reality of domestic abuse. But we can't bring it all the way home with only police officers who grew up in families where there was abuse. We now have to have a systematic commitment to sensitize people who, thank God, did not have to live through it to be a part of this movement, to sensitize prosecutors, to sensitize judges, to sensitize all of us in decisionmaking capacities, whether or not we had domestic abuse in our homes.

And let me finally say that as a kickoff to the National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, I signed today an Executive memorandum to ensure that our Federal Government continues to be a leader in this national effort. I've asked the heads of all the executive departments to conduct employee awareness campaigns modeled after the one that the Attorney General has put in place at the Department of Justice, to provide information and the re-

sources to deal with domestic violence. After all, we know there must be Federal employees at work, even as we speak, who themselves are the victims of domestic violence and who are sitting there at their desks staring blankly at a piece of paper while we here proclaim victory in this fight, and they haven't even taken the first step. So we want to set a good example.

Let me lastly say that, to all the women here and all across America who are abused or who have been abused, you are not invisible. The people who have stood with you today can now say that you are being heard, you are being seen, you are being understood.

The following quote is from one of Hillary's favorite books, and I asked if I could use it today. It's called "In the Spirit," by Susan Taylor, the editor of *Essence* magazine, and it talks about your courage, your strength, and your hope. She writes, quote, "While we cannot change the past, with the isdom of spirit, we can change what it means to us and to our future. With understanding and compassion, we can break a cycle of despair, rise above our sorrows, and find a new emotional home from which to create a brighter tomorrow. Each breath we take offers us a chance to create a better life."

Now, I hope because of all these efforts, we will all, with each breath we take, resolve that a part of that better life will be less and less and less domestic violence and abuse, until we have taken it out of the spirit and the soul and the life of the United States of America.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:06 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sgt. Mark Wynn, detective, Nashville-Davidson, TN, police department; Jerry Rossi, president, Marshalls, Inc.; and Tana Sherman, survivor of domestic violence. The proclamation on National Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the related memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.