

help our veterans apply for benefits, care for the national parks that are our natural heritage. They conduct the medical research that saves people's lives. They are important to America, and they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. I will do everything I can to see that they receive back pay and that their families do not suffer because of this.

But it is my solemn responsibility to stand against a budget plan that is bad for America and to stand up for a balanced budget that is good for America. And that is exactly what I intend to do.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:38 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House.

## Statement on Action To Prevent Default on the Public Debt *November 15, 1995*

The Republican Congress has failed to take responsible action to prevent default for the first time in our history and to ensure that the Government can meet its obligations, including paying next month's Social Security benefits. To prevent against default and all of its subsequent harmful consequences, my Secretary of Treasury

has been forced today to take extraordinary but necessary actions. I won't allow the Republican Congress to force us into default or put Social Security beneficiaries at risk. If the Republican Congress won't take action to prevent default and protect Social Security recipients, I will.

## The President's News Conference *November 16, 1995*

*The President.* Good afternoon. Today the Congress is considering a bill I find objectionable because once again it requires acceptance of the congressional Republican budget as a condition of reopening the Government.

Let me repeat: Holding the Government, the Federal employees, and the millions of Americans who depend upon them hostage to the congressional Republican budget is not the way to do this work. And it won't work, because I will still veto any bill that requires crippling cuts in Medicare, weakens the environment, reduces educational opportunity, or raises taxes on working families.

I have proposed a plan to balance the budget without undermining Medicare and Medicaid, education, the environment, or working families' incomes. If I were to sign their 7-year plan, in effect, I would be approving these cuts. I won't do that because I believe it would be bad for America.

We must balance the budget in a way that doesn't weaken our economy or violate our val-

ues, including providing the opportunity for Americans to make the most of their own lives, helping families to grow stronger and to stay together, strengthening our communities and our country.

Congress should act responsibly and pass a straightforward legislation to open the Government and enable it to meet its financial obligations. They should do it right now. That's what Congresses in the past have done, and that's what this Congress did last September.

The American people should not be held hostage anymore to the Republican budget priorities. So today I am sending Congress straightforward legislation that would reopen the Government without delay and without enacting into law the Republican budget.

We have to get to work on this in a serious way. I will work, I will work, with Congress in good faith to balance the budget. But I want to do it in a way that is good for America. It is not the fault of the Federal employees or the millions of Americans who depend upon