

dom to others around the world, not for personal ambition but solely because it was the right thing to do.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "Let him be great, and love shall follow him." Looking at the faces of Katharina Frasure and Sarah and Virginia, Gail Kruzel and John and Sarah, Sandy Drew and Samantha and Philip, and all the other family members here, we can say that love has truly followed these three great Americans we have honored.

May God bless and protect their memories, their families, and the country they gave everything to serve.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:24 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. The medals were awarded posthumously to Robert Frasure, Joseph J. Kruzel, and Samuel Nelson Drew, who died on August 19 when their military vehicle crashed en route to Sarajevo, Bosnia.

## Remarks on the Budget Negotiations *December 15, 1995*

As all of you know, today the Republicans in Congress broke off our negotiations on how best to balance the budget in 7 years. They said they would not even continue to talk unless we agreed right now to make deep and unconscionable cuts in Medicare and Medicaid. That's unacceptable. The cuts they propose would deprive millions of people of health care: poor children, pregnant women, the disabled, seniors in nursing homes. They would let Medicare wither on the vine into a second-class system. And these things simply are not necessary to balance the budget.

You know, I don't agree with their very large tax cuts for wealthy Americans and for all the special interests that get help in their bill, but I did not require them to drop those provisions as a condition of just talking. But they wanted us to agree to big cuts in Medicare and Medicaid simply to talk.

Last week, before these talks even began, I forwarded to Congress a detailed plan to balance the budget in 7 years without violating our values. That plan contained a large amount of deficit reduction over and above our original proposal. Today we made yet another good-faith effort to resolve our differences. I have sought reasonable discussions and honest compromise to balance the budget.

Now the Republicans in Congress are not only refusing to talk; once again they're threatening to shut the Government down if I do not accept their deep cuts in health care, education, the environment, and their tax increases

on working families. I would not give in to such a threat last month, and I will not give in today.

I would remind you when we signed the last resolution, we said we would work in good faith to balance the budget in 7 years without harmful cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education, the environment, agriculture, veterans benefits, and without raising taxes on working families.

So let me say again—and all Americans must understand this—the decision by the Republican congressional majority to shut the Government down has nothing, nothing, to do with the discussion over the 7-year balanced budget plan. Congress has simply refused to pass this year's budgets and has forced the Government to operate on a series of temporary approvals so that they can use the threat of a shutdown to pressure me and the congressional Democrats into approving long-term reductions in Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment that we believe strongly are not good for America.

It is wrong, it is simply wrong, for the congressional Republicans to insist that I make deep cuts in Medicare and Medicaid or they will not even talk, and furthermore, they will shut the Government down again just before Christmas.

The Congress should simply pass straightforward legislation to keep the Government open. And then our negotiators should return to the table without threats, without ultimatums, to discuss how we can find common ground on balancing the budget. That is what we ought to do. That is what I am willing to do. And the idea that we should abandon the commitment we made and they agreed to just a few

days ago in not having unacceptable cuts in Medicare and Medicaid as a condition of talking is wrong, is wrong, and we should not do that. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:39 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program *December 15, 1995*

*Dear Mr. Leader:*

I am increasingly concerned that, under the current continuing resolution, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance program (LIHEAP) is not meeting the needs of families requiring heating assistance.

With the onset of winter, low-income families need more help to keep their homes warm. Each year, LIHEAP assistance goes to about six million needy households, many of which have an elderly or disabled member or young children.

Normally, by this time of year, States' energy assistance programs would be adequately funded to help households tackle high energy bills and insulate drafty homes. This year, however, Congress still has not passed a full-year appropriations bill for Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies—the bill which funds LIHEAP. The House voted to end LIHEAP altogether.

Under the two continuing resolutions that have been enacted this fall, LIHEAP has been

funded at only \$232 million. Last year, over three times that amount was available to States between September and the end of December.

I strongly urge Congress to pass a full-year appropriation as soon as possible that includes funding for LIHEAP. At a minimum, Congress must enable the Administration to make available a seasonally appropriate share of the previously appropriated funds for LIHEAP.

Congress should act quickly. Since winter is almost upon us, a rising number of low-income Americans, particularly those living in colder regions, will continue to need more help to keep warm at home.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Robert Dole, Senate majority leader; Richard Gephardt, House Democratic leader; and Thomas Daschle, Senate Democratic leader.

## Message on the Observance of Hanukkah *December 15, 1995*

Warm greetings to all who are celebrating Hanukkah.

Each year, as the days grow shorter and the nights colder, we welcome the return of this Festival of Lights, and each year we find fresh meaning in its ageless story of the triumph of the Maccabees. We are reminded of God's powerful presence in our lives, strengthening and sustaining us in times of struggle. We are inspired to reflect upon the meaning of courage, commitment, and faith. We are encouraged to

acknowledge our blessings—the love of family, the strength of community, the hope of peace. We rediscover the wisdom of pausing, in the rush and hurry of everyday life, to give joyful thanks for these blessings.

This year, especially, we need such reminders, for with the death of Yitzhak Rabin, a great man, a true friend, and a peacemaker was taken from our midst. But as families throughout our nation and around the world gather to rekindle the flames of the menorah, let us renew our