

Jan. 6 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

continues, the more that its effects will be felt. Clearly, this is no way to run the Government and deliver services and benefits to millions of Americans, whether they are elderly, children, students, working parents, or businessmen and women.

More than 3 months into fiscal 1996, the Congress has not even sent me three of the six remaining, full-year appropriations bills. I vetoed the other three because they would have been bad for the country. Those bills underfunded essential programs for the environment, for veterans, for law enforcement, for technology, and for Native Americans.

At this point, the Congress should work with me to reach agreement on these six measures.

At the very least, the Congress should send me an acceptable continuing resolution that will fully reopen the Government while they work with me to find common ground on the budget.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
January 6, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 1358, to require the Secretary of Commerce to convey to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts the National Marine Fisheries Service laboratory located on Emerson Avenue in Gloucester, Massachusetts, approved January 6, was assigned Public Law No. 104-91.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Balanced Budget Legislation *January 6, 1996*

To the Congress of the United States:

I hereby submit to the Congress a plan to achieve a balanced budget not later than the fiscal year 2002 as certified by the Congressional Budget Office on January 6, 1996. This plan has been prepared by Senator Daschle and if

passed in its current form by the Congress, I would sign it into law.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
January 6, 1996.

Open Letter to Federal Government Employees on the Furlough *January 6, 1996*

We want to welcome back those of you who have been furloughed and express our deep appreciation to *all* of you in the federal work force.

Through no fault of your own, you have been forced to carry on in very difficult circumstances—some of you on furlough, and more of you unpaid, all of you doubtless unsettled. Although the continuing resolutions signed today provide neither a satisfactory nor a complete resolution to the current budget dispute, we have succeeded in returning all of you to work with full retroactive pay.

And if there is any positive outcome to the pain and hardship you have undergone for the past three weeks, it is that your fellow Americans have been made painfully aware of the importance of your work.

The inconvenience and pain of this shutdown spread from coast to coast. Veterans benefits were curtailed. Services to small businesses have been interrupted. Important environmental protections have been shut down, including Superfund cleanup and programs to combat air and water pollution. FBI training of state and local law enforcement officers was stopped.

The list of curtailed or limited services goes on and on. FHA mortgages and housing vouchers were halted. State rehabilitation services for those with physical and mental disabilities have started to shut down. Travellers found National Park Service facilities closed, National Forests restricted, great museums padlocked, and passports unavailable.

A ripple effect extended the economic hardship beyond the federal work force to millions of other Americans who provide services to or receive them from you—hardships that, sadly, will not disappear with the stroke of a pen.

Let us be clear: there was absolutely no excuse for this shutdown. We and Republicans in Congress have differing views on how to balance the budget, and that's why we are engaged in negotiations. But there was no justification for this government to be closed while negotiations progress. And there is no justification for Congress' failure to fully fund all government services.

Once again, many of the men and women who make up our federal government were held hostage, with your paychecks delayed and your security threatened during the holiday season. You were put unfairly in the middle of a battle you did not seek. But—whether you were furloughed or working—by your commitment and your sacrifice, you continued to serve our nation as loyally as ever during this crisis.

We salute you for your dedication, and we thank you.

BILL CLINTON
AL GORE

Remarks on the Budget Negotiations and an Exchange With Reporters *January 6, 1996*

The President. Let me say that I am pleased that Congress has completed the task of reopening the Federal Government which was begun a few days ago. And I hope that no Congress will ever again shut the Federal Government down in this way. As has been said, it is morally indefensible to hold needed Government services and hard-working Government employees hostage in a political battle.

I'm also pleased to submit the budget plan prepared by Senator Daschle which the Congressional Budget Office says will reach balance in 7 years. This plan illustrates what we have been saying all along, that you can balance the budget in 7 years and protect Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment and provide tax relief to working families.

Now it's time to get back to work. This is a moment of great national promise, and we need to find unity and common ground; we need to rise above partisanship to fashion a sensible solution that is true to our values, honors our obligations to our parents and to our children, and builds a stronger future for our country. And in just a few moments we will go back to work.

Q. Sir, what was your priority, to technically meet their demands and open it up, or to get it—

The President. Well, we have reached a point in our negotiations—we have been working in good faith now for days and days, identifying

areas of agreement as well as areas of disagreement. And last evening when we ended our session and we agreed to meet again today, we both said that we would try to speed up the negotiations, move as quickly as possible to see if we couldn't at least reach a framework agreement. And this was an appropriate time to do that. And so I'm hopeful that we can reach agreement.

As I said, these numbers show that the Congressional Budget Office agrees that you can balance the budget and still provide adequate protection for Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment.

Q. How soon do you think you can get this closed?

The President. How soon? I don't know. We've been in about a 2-hour recess now, and I'm looking forward to getting back to work. And I'm prepared to work all day tomorrow. We have tentatively agreed to start again tomorrow morning, and if the weather doesn't prevent us, I'm prepared to just stay all day. Depending on how big a snow, the weather might not only not prevent us but actually help us to stay here and get downright cozy.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.