

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on Savings Association Insurance Fund Legislation

April 24, 1996

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

The Congress has before it a proposal from the Administration that would restore the Savings Association Insurance Fund to full health and assure that interest payments on the so-called FICO bonds continue uninterrupted. With the enactment of this legislation, we could all take pride in achieving a resolution of the last remaining consequences of the thrift industry's problems of the 1980's. Moreover, we can do so without imposing additional costs on American taxpayers.

This necessary proposal will protect taxpayers, who have already paid over \$125 billion to assure that no insured depositor suffered any loss as the result of these problems. I believe this

legislation has broad bipartisan support, and I urge the Leadership to consider immediate Congressional action.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Robert Dole, Senate majority leader; Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader; Richard K. Arney, House majority leader; and Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader. This letter was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary but was not issued as a White House press release.

## Remarks on the Legislative Agenda and an Exchange With Reporters

April 25, 1996

*The President.* This is "Take Your Daughter To Work" Day. [Laughter]

*Q.* How about you?

*The President.* This is "Take Your Parents To Work" Day. [Laughter] They all brought you here. I'm glad you're here. I think it's a wonderful thing. I think it's terrific, and I'm glad to see you all.

Good afternoon. The budget agreement which is now being voted on by Congress is good for the American people. It cuts billions of dollars in spending, cuts the deficit, keeps us on the path to balancing the budget. At the same time, the budget reflects our values by preserving our commitments to education, to the preservation of the environment, and to health care.

The budget continues to put 100,000 police on the street. It will enable us to enforce anti-pollution laws. It gives me authority to block provisions that would put at risk our natural resources, our parks, and our environment. It protects our efforts in education to shrink class size, to improve teaching standards, to keep our children safe, and it funds AmeriCorps, the national service program.

Today we are showing that we can work together to cut the budget and to honor our values. But our work is not done. Now we should summon this same bipartisan spirit and we should work together to finish the job of balancing the Federal budget in 7 years.

The most important thing to happen today is simply this: We have shown that we can work together and that when we do we can get results that are good for the American people today and for our future. But when the leadership of Congress insists on going it alone, one party alone, we get gridlock, stalemate, vetoes, Government shutdowns.

Today was a real victory for progress over partisanship. Both the Republicans and the Democrats in Congress deserve credit. Let's keep it going. The message to the Republicans in Congress today from me is simple. It is a line first used in a very different context by President Kennedy: Let us never fear to negotiate.

Since I took office we've cut the budget deficit in half and more than half. Earlier this year I proposed to Congress a plan that the Congress-

sional Budget Office has certified as balancing the budget in 7 years. And our plans have in common more than enough savings to balance that budget and to provide a modest tax cut. I truly believe we can convene a true mainstream coalition to continue this progress toward a balanced budget and that we can reach agreement pretty quickly because there are so many savings common to both plans.

I want to meet with Members of Congress. I'll do it in a large group or a small one, or a one-on-one, but I want to finish the job. We have an opportunity; we can't let it slip from our grasp. We have seen now with this year's budget and the antiterrorism bill that we can do things together.

We have other important work to finish as well. Congress should pass an increase in the minimum wage. I'm disappointed that the leaders of Congress have refused to schedule a vote on the minimum wage so far. As I have said so many times, you simply can't raise a family on \$4.25 an hour, but millions of Americans are trying to do that. They don't want to be on welfare. They don't want to be dependent. They do want to be rewarded for their work, and they want to be able to raise their children in dignity. The increase in the minimum wage I have proposed will help them to do that.

And Congress should also move forward to send me the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill with no special interest amendments. Again, that bill, as proposed by Senator Kassebaum and Senator Kennedy, passed the United States Senate 100 to zero. That is a clear, unambiguous statement that it is beyond politics to say to the working people of America, "You ought not to lose your health insurance when you change jobs, and you ought to be able to get it even if somebody in your family has been sick."

Let's don't litter this up with special interest amendments. Let's don't let this opportunity pass. Let's don't walk away from the plain, clear, unambiguous needs of millions of American families. Let's pass this bill unadorned, simple, good, and strong.

Again I say that this agreement shows what we can do when we work together. Yesterday with the signing of the antiterrorism legislation, we showed what we can do when we work together. I look forward to joining with the Republican and the Democratic leaders in Congress to give the American people the balanced budget they deserve. I hope they will join with

me. We show today that that's the way to get things done in the American system.

Thank you.

#### *Budget Agreement*

*Q.* Why do you think that happened? Why do you think there was a compromise or turning point after all these months?

*The President.* I'm not sure. We would have happily accepted this budget last year. I think that the forces within the majority party in Congress who wanted to show some positive results prevailed. I think the spirit of principled compromise prevailed. I have shown a willingness to work with them and to compromise with them. And I have also shown that I am very anxious to reduce this deficit.

Even though we still have some problems with our budget, I'd like to point out that it is the lowest deficit of any advanced economy in the world as a percentage of our income. This is going to—the more we keep driving the deficit down, the more we're going to get interest rates down, the more we're going to keep growth going, the sooner we'll be able to see American incomes going up. So I want to do this with them. I don't know what happened, but whatever it was, it was a very positive and good thing.

I want to thank Mr. Panetta for the work that he did on this in negotiating on our behalf very strongly but also in a conciliatory spirit. And I want to thank the leaders in Congress who did the same. We can get this done in lots of other areas if we just keep working at it.

#### *Bipartisan Cooperation*

*Q.* Are you worried that Republicans won't go along with a 7-year balanced budget because they're worried about making you look good before the election?

*The President.* Well, I don't know. You see, I believe there's enough credit to go around when you do the right thing. Yesterday, when I asked the Members of Congress to stand out there, most of them Republicans who came, although we had a fair number of our Democrats who were there as well—

*Q.* Senator Dole was way in the back, though.

*The President.* Well, that was his choice. I think—I saw him—I saw him, in a generous gesture, make sure that the committee chairs,

Senator Hatch and Mr. Hyde, got to go up front. He was just being generous to them.

But I believe that when we do things together, the American people are not fooled. They know that I cannot claim full credit for a bill that goes through a Congress that is majority Republican, and they are more than happy to give credit to people who actually work together to build things.

So I believe that—my argument is this: If we have an agreement that is within our grasp, that we know is good for the country, then the credit will take care of itself, and the credit will probably flow in appropriate proportions to everybody involved in it. Then there are still all these things that there is disagreement on, that you can have a legitimate, exciting, interesting campaign about, thrown into the future.

My view is that, you know, we got into this budget mess because of profligate decisions that no one who was here in Washington during the time in either party is probably completely blameless from, between 1981 and 1993. And I see passing this balanced budget amendment as a way of taking care of a past problem that we need to get rid of. Then we can debate this march into the future, which path are we going to take for the future.

Everybody knows in the next 4 years we are walking right into the 21st century. The answer is, which road are we going to take. That debate will still be out there. The American people can have that debate, make their judgments

without being frustrated at the political system in Washington for not producing results today.

So I think we can get these things done, and I hope we will.

*Whitewater*

*Q.* The Justice Department is asking Judge Howard to keep your videotaped testimony off TV and out of political ads. Two questions: One, are you afraid of being embarrassed by the tape? And secondly, do you agree with a growing number of people who think that Kenneth Starr should step down?

*The President.* Well, I'll just answer the question about my testimony, and I'll—I don't think I should answer the other question at this time. The facts are what they are, and they are plain for all to see now on the second question you asked me.

On the first question, what I want to do is to—I was asked to testify. If I have any information that is helpful, I want to be able to give it. I think that the American people and the press should have access to my testimony but that it shouldn't be abused in any way.

And so that is the position that I have taken. And I take it that is the position the Justice Department has taken, and they will have more to say about that as we go along.

*NOTE:* The President spoke at 4 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. During the exchange, a reporter referred to U.S. District Judge George Howard, Jr.

## Remarks on the Agreement With Lebanon, Israel, and Syria and an Exchange With Reporters

*April 26, 1996*

*The President.* Good afternoon. As you all know, just a short time ago Secretary Christopher concluded an agreement with the leaders of Israel, Lebanon, and Syria, to end the current crisis in southern Lebanon and northern Israel and to prevent it from starting again. I spoke with the Secretary this morning, shortly after 7 o'clock, and I have just spoken with the Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who joins me in welcoming this achievement.

The agreement will stop Katyusha rocket attacks on northern Israel and protect both Lebanese and Israeli citizens. It sets up a mechanism to which Israel and Lebanon can refer complaints, composed of those two countries, the United States, France, and Syria. Because it is in writing, this agreement will be less likely to break down than the informal understandings that had been in place since 1993.

I want to congratulate Secretary Christopher and his team for their tireless efforts over the