

read well, every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old, without regard to their family's income, who's willing to work for it, can go on to college, every single one of them who wants to go. It will depend upon whether every adult can keep on learning for a lifetime.

These are the things that are driving my administration in these 4 years. We are about to conclude debate in the Senate today on a balanced budget amendment that will give our country the first balanced budget we've had since the 1960's. And it's high time, and I'm proud of it. But I want to say to you that the deficit has already been cut by more than 75 percent, thanks to the work that Senator Byrd and Senator Rockefeller, Congressman Mollohan and Congressman Rahall did back in 1993. Now, we're going to finish the job, and we're also going to increase our investment in education, even as we cut the deficit, because we want to fix the deficit today but fix the future of the young people of this country and this State for tomorrow.

So let me say, today I was deeply touched—the drive from here to the high school—to see all the people along the way. I stopped a couple of times to say hello to the children coming back and it made us a little late and I hope you'll forgive us. But there were thousands of

people along the way, all of you here—it makes me very happy personally, but more than that, as your President, it makes me happy to see you supporting the future of this country and the future of our children.

So I ask you this. You gave me a chance to serve again; now let's get behind a common goal: to raise our standards to the highest in the world in education and to believe that every one of our children can learn and to commit ourselves to a future more brilliant than our glorious past and to know that the way we're going to do it is one child at a time. I'll do my part. You do yours, and we'll all be celebrating when 2000 rolls around.

God bless you, and thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:05 p.m. at Benedum Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gaston Caperton, former West Virginia Governor; Mayor Carl E. Furbee of Bridgeport; Mayor Robert T. Flynn of Clarksburg; West Virginia Secretary of State Ken Hechler; State Attorney General Darrell McGraw, Jr.; State Treasurer John Perdue; State Auditor Glen Gainer III; State Agriculture Secretary Gus Douglass; Speaker of the House of Delegates Robert Kiss; State Senate President Earl Ray Tomblin; State Senate Majority Leader H. Truman Chafin; and Mary Frances Smith, who sang the national anthem.

Statement on Supplemental Emergency Legislation for Disaster Assistance *May 22, 1997*

I urge the Congress not to leave for Memorial Day recess without sending me a clean emergency supplemental bill that provides the disaster assistance upon which hundreds of thousands of Americans are depending. The people of 33 States are waiting for the Congress to act. In

recent weeks, we have witnessed extraordinary destruction in the Dakotas and Minnesota matched only by the courage with which residents of these States have faced their plight. The Congress owes it to them to pass a clean bill and send it to me for my signature.

The President's Radio Address *May 24, 1997*

Good morning. This past week, the House and the Senate voted by overwhelming bipartisan majorities to endorse an historic, bipartisan

agreement to balance the Federal budget by

2002. This agreement brings us closer to putting our fiscal house in order, and it represents a huge downpayment toward America's future prosperity.

Already, our economy is the envy of the world. In the last 4 years, it's created 12 million new jobs. We've had the highest economic growth in a decade, the lowest unemployment in 24 years, the lowest inflation in 30 years, the largest decline in income inequality since the 1960's. The deficit has been cut already by 77 percent, thanks to the historic 1993 budget and economic package passed by the Congress at that time.

And now, with a balanced budget agreement, our economy can continue to thrive. We'll balance our books while we protect Medicare and Medicaid, invest in education and environmental protection, and give our people a tax cut. It's a balanced budget that's in balance with our values. Now I urge all Members of Congress of both parties to take the next step, to finish the job and write this agreement into law.

This is a proud moment. Our balanced budget agreement shows what we can accomplish when we work together, across party lines, in the interest of the American people. This is how our Government should work.

But today I have to talk about an example of how it should not work and how it's not working. Our Government is not working for our citizens in the Dakotas and Minnesota, who are still waiting for the Congress to act so that they can begin the long road back from the floods that destroyed their homes and devastated their lives.

Tens of thousands of people suffered losses in these floods. Now they're trying to reclaim their lives and their communities. But they can't do it alone. Some have depended on the kindness of neighbors they didn't even know. The town of Thompson, North Dakota, doubled its population when residents opened their homes and their churches and took in 1,000 people from flooded Grand Forks, 11 miles away. Private citizens became angels, volunteering and donating everything from essential supplies to evening dresses, so that a flooded high school could still have its prom. One woman quietly donated millions of dollars for distribution to victims.

All that is welcome help. But recovering from a large natural disaster takes more; it takes the combined resources of our Nation. That was

the only way back after the earthquakes and fires in California, the flooding in the Mississippi Valley and the Pacific Northwest, the tornadoes in the South, the hurricanes in Florida. Right now, people in 33 States need some degree of disaster assistance. Just imagine being in their shoes, having your life's work swept away, your home gone, often in an instant. Think of your concern for your family and your home. That's why we need quick and effective governmental action, from rescue efforts by the National Guard to financial and other assistance from our Federal agencies. They've all done well by our people, and I am especially proud of the work of our Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, and its Director, James Lee Witt. Now FEMA is a model for responding to disasters. When I took office, it was often criticized; now I think it's the most often complimented Federal agency.

After I visited North Dakota with the congressional delegation, including the Senators from North Dakota, Kent Conrad and Byron Dorgan, who join me here today, and saw the impact of the floods last month, I asked James Lee Witt to chair a task force of our Federal agencies and come up with a plan for the region's long-term recovery. Now we have that plan to deliver help quickly while we get maximum results for every Federal dollar spent.

But to get that long-term relief to our people, we must have action from Congress. I asked congressional leaders for just that, in an emergency supplemental spending bill, the kind that we have had before when we had disasters. Many Members, led by lawmakers from the flooded States, worked hard to get a bill to me, but I'm sorry to say, some Members of the majority tried to use this important bill for different purposes. And without taking action, Congress left town, and our people were left in the lurch.

Hundreds of thousands of our citizens are depending on this aid so they can get on with their lives. Even without action from the Congress, we're doing all we can to get immediate help to the victims. FEMA is using all the resources and authority it has to help with food, shelter, and emergency services. But these funds are limited. They will eventually run out, and they won't start the job of long-term recovery.

Unless Congress approves these disaster relief funds, the victims cannot begin their long-term

recovery; they can't rebuild homes and businesses; farmers can't dig out their fields to plant crops. These people are in dire need, and Congress has failed to act for them. That is unconscionable. It flies in the face of the spirit of bipartisan cooperation we saw in our budget negotiations, and it's not how we treated other Americans when they were in similar dire straits over the last 4 years.

In North Dakota, I saw not only the devastation of the floods, I saw the determination of the people, proud people doing their level-best to survive and get on with their lives. They don't expect free rides or handouts, but they do have a right to expect us to do the right thing by them, as we have by their fellow Americans when they were down and out.

The wrath of nature can be random, swift, and unforgiving. That's where human nature

must provide a balance. We should act out of compassion, as many Americans have, to help the victims. And in Government, we must act because that is our duty as Americans. We cannot leave the victims without the help they need and deserve. We have to act.

I urge Congress to do its part and to do it quickly. Disaster doesn't take a holiday. Let's work together to bring relief to people who need it—now.

In closing, I want to wish you all a happy Memorial Day weekend. Drive safely, drive slowly, and buckle up.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:08 p.m. on May 23 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 24.

Remarks at a Memorial Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia May 26, 1997

Thank you very much. General Foley, Chaplain Schwartzman, Mr. Metzler, to the members of the Cabinet, General Shalikashvili and the leaders of our Armed Forces, to Members of Congress, and especially to the members of the Armed Forces who are here, the leaders of our veterans organizations, all of you who are veterans and your families, and all of you who are family members of those who have given their lives in the service of our country.

My fellow Americans, we gather here today, as we do faithfully every year, to pay tribute to our country men and women who fell in the line of duty, who gave their lives to preserve the liberties upon which our Nation was founded and which we have managed to carry forward for more than 200 years now. All across America, our grateful Nation comes together today to honor these men and women, some celebrated, others quite unknown, each a patriot and a hero.

For many of our schoolchildren who have known no war, today may seem to be little more than a day off from school or a welcome start to the summer. But on this day, and all that we pause to remember, there are essential lessons for the young and, indeed, for all the rest

of us as well: Appreciate the blessings of freedom; recognize the power and virtue of sacrifice; respect those who gave everything on behalf of our common good.

This day reminds us of what we can achieve when we pull together as one nation, respecting each other with all of our myriad differences, but coming together, we can fight any battle and face any challenge.

It reminds us of our duty to honor not only those we have lost in freedom's cause but also, through attention and care, the service men and women who came back home and are now our veterans, as well as the families of those for whom there tragically has never been a final accounting.

It reminds us of our obligation to take care of those who have taken care of us and those who take care of us today. That means ensuring that our men and women in uniform have the best training and equipment and preparation possible to do their jobs for freedom, because even in times of peace, we must remain vigilant in a very new and still uncertain world.

And above all, it reminds us of America's responsibility to remain the world's leading force for peace and prosperity and freedom as we