

Woodrow Wilson to Franklin Roosevelt to Harry Truman to John Kennedy to Lyndon Johnson to Jimmy Carter to the present day, through all of our leadership in Congress in the 20th century forward, our party—we haven't always been right; we haven't always been up to date; but we have always been for widening the circle of opportunity, deepening the meaning of liberty and freedom, and uniting and strengthening the United States of America. That is what we ought to be about here. That is what we ought to

be about. And if we do it, the American people will respond.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:28 a.m. in the Dirksen Senate Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Barbara Turner, founder, Boscart Construction Co., Inc., and Washington, DC, chair, Women's Leadership Forum; Judith Lee, comptroller, Older Women's League; and Kate Casey, student, Trinity College, Washington, DC.

Statement on the United States District Court Decision on the Line Item Veto

February 12, 1998

The line item veto provides an important tool for the President to strike unnecessary spending and tax items from legislation. Congress took the correct step giving the President this authority, and I was pleased to sign the line item veto into law. It has worked well, saving the

American taxpayers more than \$1 billion already. Although I am disappointed with today's ruling, it is my belief that, ultimately, the line item veto will be ruled constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Message on the Observance of Presidents' Day, 1998

February 12, 1998

Warm greetings to all Americans as we observe Presidents' Day, 1998.

On this day we remember with pride the history of the American Presidency and the achievements of the many extraordinary leaders who have guided our nation's course over the past two centuries. Each President in his own time has faced unique challenges in striving to fulfill the purpose of our Constitution "to form a more perfect Union."

For George Washington, that challenge meant sustaining and strengthening the fragile Union he had helped to establish. During the eight years of his Presidency, he carried out the awesome responsibilities of his office with such care and wisdom that he confirmed the trust of his fellow Americans and proved to a watching world that our new republic would survive and flourish.

Abraham Lincoln's great challenge was to preserve the Union. Taking the oath of office after

seven states had already seceded, President Lincoln resolved to keep our country united, even at the cost of civil war. With courage and tenacity, he led America through four years of bloody conflict and, in victory, reached out to begin the healing that would bring us together again as one nation. "With malice toward none," he said less than two months before his death, "with charity for all . . . let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds . . . to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace . . ."

Today we face our own challenge to build a more perfect Union, a Union that must now be forged from one of history's most racially and culturally diverse societies. We can do so by widening the circle of opportunity for all our people: opportunity for a good education, opportunity for good jobs, opportunity to reach our own great potential. If we do so, we will