

Oct. 25 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

Buell; J. Richard Fredericks, senior managing director, NationsBanc Montgomery Securities, Inc.; former Senator Alan Cranston; gubernatorial candidate Lt. Gov. Gray Davis of California; Art Torres, State Democratic chair; murder victim

Matthew Shepard's parents, Dennis and Judy, and his brother, Logan; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and Matt Fong, Republican senatorial candidate.

Statement on the Student Loan Default Rate

October 26, 1998

When I came into office, there was a student loan default crisis in this Nation. Nearly one out of every four students was failing to pay back his loan.

Today I am proud to announce that we have brought the default rate down below 10 percent, the lowest rate since these data have been collected. The student loan program is now a shining example of Government providing opportunity with accountability.

Some of those failing to pay back their loans were victims of fly-by-night schools that never followed through on their promises. I am proud that over the past 6 years, we have eliminated 1,065 schools from the student loan program, protecting students and taxpayers from fraud and abuse.

Other students had difficulty affording their loan payments, because they were just getting on their feet, or they had decided to take low-paying jobs serving their communities. I am

pleased that the reforms for which I fought have given those borrowers a wide variety of options, including paying off their loans as a percentage of their income over time. And because of our economic strategy of reducing the deficit while investing in people's skills, there are jobs for those who finish college, so they can pay off their loans.

Unfortunately, there will always be some who just do not take their responsibilities seriously and then expect taxpayers to cover for them. Fortunately for the taxpayers, this Government has expanded the tools that it has to find these defaulters and arrange for payment. That has taught others that a student loan is not a free ride.

This success comes from the hard work of Government. It is a testament to the commitment of our Secretary of Education, to the policies that we have implemented, and to the people who have put them into practice.

Statement on the Ecuador-Peru Border Settlement Agreement

October 26, 1998

I want to congratulate Presidents Mahuad of Ecuador and Fujimori of Peru on the historic signing today in Brasilia of a border settlement agreement between Ecuador and Peru. This signing marks the end of the last and longest running source of armed international conflict in the Western Hemisphere.

I am proud of the role the United States has played, alongside the other Guarantors, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, in bringing about the settlement. Mack McLarty, my former Special Envoy for the Americas, and Ambassador

Luigi Einaudi, our Special Envoy for the Ecuador/Peru Process, have worked tirelessly over the past 3 years in cooperation with the parties and the other Guarantors to bring about this historic peace settlement. On October 9, I met with Presidents Mahuad and Fujimori at the White House to accept their joint request for the four Guarantors of the Rio Protocol to help them reach a final settlement.

U.S. military personnel, along with those of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, have also made