

Statement on House of Representatives Action on the Violence Against Women Act

September 26, 2000

Yesterday I called on Congress to act quickly to strengthen and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. More than 900,000 women across the country suffer violence at the hands of an intimate partner each year, demonstrating the continuing need for this legislation. I am very pleased that today the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. This vote affirms our commitment to support the work of State and local prosecutors, law enforcement agencies,

and health care and social service professionals throughout the country who every day respond to women who are victims of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault.

It is now time for the Senate to act. Unless the act is reauthorized by September 30, authorization for critical grant programs supporting the victims of domestic violence will be in jeopardy. With over 70 sponsors in the Senate, there is no reason for delay.

Remarks Following the Premiere of “Remember the Titans”

September 26, 2000

Folks, come on. Give them a hand. *[Applause]* I just want to say two things, besides thanks to Jerry and the director and the stars, for giving us a gift. First thing is, I’ve actually had the honor, as President, of going to T.C. Williams High School. And you might be interested to know that that school district is now the most racially, ethnically, religiously diverse school district in the whole United States of America. That high school now has students whose families come from more than 80 countries and speak more than 50 languages.

And after some of the troubles at schools around America, I went out there because they are a model for the whole country and how different people relate to each other and work together and solve their problems. And it all started here with them, 30 years ago.

The second thing is, I was watching this movie, and you know I grew up in the South, where football was next to religion, except for people who were really serious about football.

And I was watching this, and I was thinking back over the last 8 years and all the times I spent trying to get people in other countries to quit fighting each other because they were different and trying to get people in America to get over their differences. And I was just thinking, if only we could learn over again every day the lesson these young men, when they were young—and they’re still young to me—*[laughter]*—learned from each other.

The reason that’s so powerful is, they won a victory of the human heart. And I hope that all of us will remember the gift they gave us and keep on winning.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10 p.m. at the Uptown Theater. In his remarks, he referred to the film’s producer, Jerry Bruckheimer, and director, Boaz Yakin. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on the National Economy and an Exchange With Reporters September 27, 2000

National Economy

The President. Good morning. Yesterday I announced that household income has reached an all-time high and the poverty rate has fallen to its lowest level in 20 years. Today there's more good economic news.

Eight years ago, our future was at risk. Economic growth was low; unemployment was high; interest rates were high; the Federal debt had quadrupled in the previous 12 years. When Vice President Gore and I took office, the budget deficit was \$290 billion, and it was projected this year the budget deficit would be \$455 billion.

The American people, thankfully, chose a better future. They put their support behind a new economic direction of fiscal discipline, greater investment in our people, expanded trade in our products. It's given us the longest economic expansion in history and the strongest fiscal turnaround in memory. Record budget deficits have given way to record surpluses. And this has enabled us to do something that would have been impossible just 8 years ago. We've actually begun to pay down the debt.

Today we received more good news that our strategy is working. According to the Office of Management and Budget, this year's budget surplus will be at least \$230 billion. With this surplus, we've been able to cut the debt over the last 3 years by this figure.

[At this point, the President wrote the number on a chart showing the deficit.]

The President. Three hundred and sixty billion dollars in debt reduction over the last 3 years.

This year alone we've cut the debt by at least \$223 billion, the largest one-year debt reduction in the history of the United States. Like our Olympic athletes in Sydney, the American people are breaking all kinds of records these days. This is the first year we've balanced the budget without using the Medicare Trust Fund since Medicare was created in 1965. I think we should follow Al Gore's advice and lock those Trust Funds away for the future.

We've come a long way since then and a long way since 1993. But we can go further still. If we stay on the path we're on, we can

pay this debt off entirely by 2012, for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835. Paying off the debt will benefit America, just as paying off credit cards benefits the average family. It frees up money for things that matter, and it keeps interest rates lower. That will mean more investment, more jobs, lower mortgage payments, car payments, and student loan payments. This is all terribly important.

Already the benefits of debt reduction have meant about \$2,000 a year—or deficit reduction, and then debt reduction has been about \$2,000 a year in lower interest payments for home mortgages, about \$200 a year in lower interest payments for cars, about \$200 a year for lower interest payments on college loans. And if we stay on this path, rather than go back and spend all the surplus and get back into the Social Security funds, it will keep interest rates about a point lower over the next decade. That will be worth, in home mortgages alone, over \$300 billion.

So this is a very important thing to do. And I hope that we will see a continuation of this trend in this year's final end-game budget negotiations. However, the fiscal year is almost over, and Congress still has sent me only 2 of the 13 spending bills. We need to put our priorities in order and put the broad national interest above special interests.

The key to fiscal discipline, to these kinds of results, is maintaining it each year, year after year. If you look at what's happened in the last 8 years, Federal spending today as a percentage of the economy is the lowest it has been since 1966. The Federal civilian work force is the smallest it's been since 1960, down 377,000 from the day I took office.

I am concerned, frankly, about the size and last-minute nature of this year's congressional spending spree, where they seem to be loading up the spending bills with special projects for special interests but can't seem to find the time to raise the minimum wage or pass a Patients' Bill of Rights or drug benefits for our seniors through Medicare or tax cuts for long-term care, child care, or college education.

And first and foremost, they haven't found the funds for education, for continuing to hire