

better. I may have something to say tomorrow, but I think today I'd like to say less and try to keep working.

2000 Campaign

Q. What about the campaign? You seemed to be having an awful good time at that fundraiser a little while ago. [Laughter]

The President. I was having a good time. It's easier for me when you don't have to run. It's easier. I'm having a good time.

Do the briefing, Joe.

Press Secretary Lockhart. Okay. [Laughter]

The President. Keep me out of trouble. Stay bored. [Laughter] Bored.

Press Secretary Lockhart. I can do that.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2 p.m. in the James S. Brady Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mr. Lockhart's wife, Laura Logan, and daughter, Clare. A reporter referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. The President's remarks were included in the transcript of the press briefing by Press Secretary Lockhart.

Statement on the Jewish High Holidays in Russia *September 29, 2000*

On behalf of the American people, I want to wish the Jewish community in Russia a happy, enriching, and peaceful New Year. People across the United States are profoundly moved by the flowering of religious life for all faiths in Russia. Jewish life, in particular, is flourishing, with synagogues and Jewish cultural centers opening in regions all across the country.

Russia's support for democratic principles, religious freedom, and inter-ethnic tolerance will have a direct impact on its standing in the inter-

national community and our ability to support Russia's international integration.

The United States stands with Russia's Jewish community as it advances the cause of religious freedom, builds a more inclusive society, and counters the forces of hatred and bigotry. In our tightly interwoven world, the advance of freedom in one country strengthens freedom everywhere. Your community's efforts are truly historic. Our hopes and prayers are with you for the coming year. *L'Shanah Tovah!*

Statement on Signing the First Continuing Resolution for Fiscal Year 2001 *September 29, 2000*

Today I have signed into law H.J. Res. 109, a short-term continuing resolution for FY 2001.

The Resolution provides 2001 appropriations for continuing projects and activities of the Federal Government through October 6, 2000, except for those funded by the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2001, and the Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2001, which I have signed into law.

In February, I sent a budget to the Congress that funded critical investments in our future. We need realistic levels of funding for critical Government functions that the American people expect their Government to perform well, including education, law enforcement, environ-

mental protection, preservation of our global leadership, air safety, food safety, economic assistance for the less fortunate, research and technology, administration of Social Security and Medicare, and other important programs. None of the funding bills for the programs that support these functions have been sent to the White House.

I urge the Congress to approve the 11 remaining 2001 spending bills as quickly as possible, in an acceptable form.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 29, 2000.

NOTE: H.J. Res. 109, approved September 29, was assigned Public Law No. 106-275.

The President's Radio Address *September 30, 2000*

Good morning. This has been a good week for America. As our athletes continue to pile up medals in Sydney, our economy continues to break records at home. This week we learned that household income had reached an all-time high, poverty a 20-year low; the budget surplus is the largest on record; and for the first time in 12 years, thanks largely to the Children's Health Insurance Program, the number of Americans without health insurance has declined by over 1½ million.

Today I want to talk with you about making the most of this moment, by putting our children's education first and building better schools for them.

This fall our schools opened their doors to the largest number of students in history. We have to work hard to give them the best education in history. We're working to turn our schools around, with higher standards, stronger accountability, and more investment. Reading, math, and SAT scores are up. So are high school graduation and college-going rates. We dramatically increased Head Start, after-school, and summer school programs. The number of students in States with core curriculum standards has increased from 14 to 49, and in State after State, failing schools are being turned around. With the Vice President's E-rate program, we've helped connect 95 percent of our schools to the Internet, and we're in the process of hiring 100,000 high-quality teachers to reduce class size in the early grades.

But it's hard for students to lift themselves up in schools that are falling down. Across our Nation, students are struggling to learn in schools that are crowded and crumbling. I visited schools all over the country where this is so: a school in Florida where classes were held not in one or two but 12 trailers; a school in Queens, where there were 400 more students than the school was built for; a school in Virginia, where the electrical service in some classrooms is so poor that if you plug in a new

computer in the wall, the circuit breaker cuts off. This is a challenge all across our country. In cities and rural areas, small towns and Native American communities, the average American school building is now more than 40 years old. The estimated price tag to bring our schools into good condition—\$127 billion.

Today I'm releasing a new Department of Education analysis that highlights the nationwide need to build new schools and modernize existing ones. The study provides a State-by-State report card that shows that at least 60 percent of the schools in every State are in need of repair. Many States and local communities are working to fix their schools, but too many school districts simply don't have the tax base to handle the burden alone.

That's why I've proposed a school construction tax credit to help communities build or modernize 6,000 schools and, also, grants and loans for emergency repairs in nearly 5,000 schools a year for 5 years.

The good news is, we have a bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives ready right now to pass school construction relief. But the Republican leadership continues to stand in the way and refuses to bring it to a vote. Every day they stall is another day our children are forced to go to school in trailers, overcrowded classrooms, and crumbling buildings. Congress must act now.

In a larger sense, this is about our priorities and values. The schools I attended as a child were fairly old, but they were very well-maintained. They sent every student a clear message: You are important; we take your education seriously. That's how my parents' generation kept faith with us, and how we must keep faith with our children.

But the clock is ticking. At midnight tonight the fiscal year runs out. Congress still hasn't sent me a budget for education and other pressing priorities. Yet, they have found the time, first, to pass huge, fiscally irresponsible tax cuts