

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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Editor’s Note: The Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents is also available on the Inter-
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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, October 22, 1999

Statement on the Award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Doctors Without Borders

October 15, 1999

Doctors Without Borders (*Medecins sans Frontieres*) richly deserves the Nobel Peace Prize. They work around the world, under difficult and often dangerous conditions, to provide medical assistance to the victims of conflict and natural disasters. They have cared for the sick and the wounded at refugee camps in Kosovo and Timor, aided flood victims in the Philippines, treated disease in Sudan and Sierra Leone, Vietnam and Peru. Their work is emblematic of the commitment of so many people of good will today to build a global community where compassion, cooperation, and progress increasingly know no borders.

I am proud that the United States Government has provided substantial annual assistance to Doctors Without Borders, and that we work together closely in times of crisis. Humanitarian relief of this kind is not only the right thing to do for our values; it also helps build peace and stability and thereby strengthens America's own security.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on United Nations Security Council Action Against International Terrorism and the Taliban

October 15, 1999

I applaud the U.N. Security Council for taking a strong stand against international terrorism today and demanding that the Taliban stop harboring Usama bin Ladin. The Security Council's resolution, which passed by a unanimous vote, will result in economic sanctions being placed on the

Taliban if they do not deliver bin Ladin within 30 days to a country where he can be brought to justice.

The Security Council's action demonstrates the international community's understanding of the threat posed by bin Ladin and his network of terrorists. Despite the condemnation of scores of countries after the 1998 bombing of our Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the Taliban has continued to allow bin Ladin and his network to operate training camps, make threats against the United States and others, and plan terrorist operations from their bases in Afghanistan. Now the international community has spoken with one voice. The sanctions the U.N. has chosen parallel the unilateral ones that the United States placed on the Taliban in July and will result in the restriction of landing rights of airlines owned, leased, or operated by or on behalf of the Taliban, the freezing of Taliban accounts around the world, and the prohibition of investment in any undertaking owned or controlled by the Taliban.

The international community has sent a clear message. The choice between cooperation and isolation lies with the Taliban.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

October 16, 1999

Good morning. Today I want to talk about what we must do to make sure people with disabilities who are ready, willing, and able to work can be part of our Nation's prosperity.

Work is an awfully important part of who we are as Americans. It connects us with our communities and provides dignity for our families. Today, more Americans are working than ever before. Since 1993, in January, when I took office, we've had the largest

peacetime expansion in our history and created more than 19 million new jobs. Unemployment is at a 29-year low; welfare rates, a 30-year low; poverty, a 20-year low, with the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years.

But in spite of the good economic news, there are people in places still not touched by our prosperity. Among them are almost three out of four Americans with severe disabilities who want to work, but aren't working. This is not just a missed opportunity for them; it's a missed opportunity for all the rest of us, too.

If we want to keep our economy growing with continued low inflation and low unemployment, we must draw on the untapped potential of our people. That's why I launched our enterprise zone and enterprise community initiative 6½ years ago, under the leadership of Vice President Gore, to bring investment and jobs to rural and urban areas with high unemployment.

That's why I'm working now to pass our new markets initiative in Congress, to give Americans the same incentive to invest in poor communities in America we now give them to invest in poor communities in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and central Europe. And that's why I established a Presidential task force on the employment of adults with disabilities last year, to help remove the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from going to work.

In December Vice President Gore received the first set of recommendations by the task force, and I'm proud to say we've taken action on every one. The budget I proposed last January would invest more than \$2 billion in health care, tax credits, and new technologies for people with disabilities. I also signed an Executive order to eliminate unfair barriers to Federal employment for people with psychiatric disabilities.

Today I announce new steps we're taking to ensure that when it comes to the employment of people with disabilities, the Federal Government leads by example. And today I'm releasing the first-ever Government plan to ensure positive career paths for people with disabilities in our Federal work force. I'm directing every Federal agency and department to take concrete action to expand

opportunities for people with disabilities in all levels of the work force, from entry to senior ranks.

And I'm calling on all agencies to recruit and promote people with disabilities, to reach out to students with disabilities, to provide reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities. I'm also calling on our Federal human resources agency, the Office of Personnel Management, to ensure that every agency gets the help it needs to fulfill these commitments. We are the Nation's largest employer. I want it to be a model for private industry, and this plan will help to do just that.

But there's more to do. One of the biggest barriers facing people with disabilities is the fear of losing their health insurance when they get a job. Under current law, many people with disabilities cannot keep their Medicaid or Medicare coverage if they work. This creates a tremendous disincentive to work, because they have to have health care, and neither they nor their employer can afford, or often even find, health insurance.

There's a commonsense, bipartisan bill to change that. It's called the "Work Incentives Improvement Act;" it was sponsored by Republican Senators Jeffords and Roth and Democratic Senators Kennedy and Moynihan. Simply put, it will make sure that people with disabilities don't lose their health care when they gain a job. This bill passed the Senate 99-0. A bipartisan majority in the House has already cosponsored it. So I say to Congress, don't water the bill down, guarantee its financing, and go ahead and send it to me so we can sign it without delay.

It will make money for America. It will make more taxpayers. And we'll be spending the Medicaid money regardless. Americans with disabilities who want to work shouldn't have to wait one more day.

After years of delay, last week the House of Representatives finally heard the voice of the American people and passed a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. By choosing progress over partisanship again, we can also pass the "Work Incentives Improvement Act" and keep American working and growing.

I urge the leadership to seize this opportunity. Make this a season of progress, not

a winter of partisan politics. Let's finish the job the American people sent us here to do.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:39 p.m. on October 15 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 16. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 15 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Memorandum on Hiring People With Disabilities in the Federal Government

October 16, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Hiring People with Disabilities in the Federal Government

Since I became President, we have created over 19 million new jobs and unemployment is as low as it has been in 29 years. Still, almost 75 percent of working-age Americans with severe disabilities remain unemployed. If this Nation is to live up to its promise of equal opportunity, and our economy is to continue to strengthen and expand, we must draw on the untapped energy and creativity of these millions of capable Americans.

One of the most glaring barriers to work for people with disabilities is that they frequently become ineligible for Medicaid or Medicare if they go back to work, putting them in the untenable position of choosing between health care coverage and employment. That is why my budget fully funds the Work Incentives Improvement Act, investing \$1.2 billion over 5 years in health care and employment services so that people with disabilities can work. This legislation was unanimously endorsed by the House Commerce Committee on May 19 and has been cosponsored by a majority of the House of Representatives; it passed the Senate 99-0 on June 16. It is time for the Congress to finish the job and pass the Work Incentives Improvement Act immediately. People with disabilities who want to work should not have to wait one more day.

Vice President Gore and I have already taken a number of steps to increase the em-

ployment of people with disabilities. On March 13, 1998, I signed Executive Order 13078 establishing the National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities to create a coordinated national policy to bring working-age individuals with disabilities into gainful employment. In December, the Task Force presented the Vice President with its first report, and I am proud to say we have taken action on all the Task Force's formal recommendations.

As we fight to ensure that all people with disabilities have the health care and other assistance they need to go to work, we must also lead by example and make the Federal Government a model employer of people with disabilities. On June 4, 1999, I signed an Executive order eliminating the Federal Government's stricter hiring standards for people with psychiatric disabilities, an issue highlighted by Mrs. Gore earlier in the year. And last December, the Vice President asked the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to develop a plan to increase the representation of adults with disabilities in the Federal workforce.

Today I am pleased to release that plan, *Accessing Opportunity: The Plan for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government*, and the companion employment guide prepared by OPM. These documents give agencies detailed and practical information on ways to recruit people with disabilities for positions at all levels of government; provide opportunities for students with disabilities; ensure career opportunities for people with disabilities; collect and maintain data to monitor their success; and provide reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities.

I therefore direct you to implement this plan immediately within your departments and agencies and to bring qualified people with disabilities into the Federal workforce. This plan is proof of the Federal Government's commitment to empowering people with disabilities; now is the time for us to fulfill that commitment.

William J. Clinton

Proclamation 7242—National Character Counts Week, 1999

October 16, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The character of our citizens has enriched every aspect of our national life and has set an example of civic responsibility for people around the world. The diligence and determination that are part of our Nation's work ethic have strengthened our economy, and the firm convictions of our spiritual leaders have helped guide our communities, fostering unity, compassion, and humility.

In this dynamic time of unparalleled opportunity and possibility, our children will encounter a variety of new challenges that will test the strength of their character and convictions. As the dawn of the new millennium fast approaches, we must work together—parents, public officials, educators, entertainers, and business and religious leaders—to impart to our youth the core values they need to be good citizens.

We know that parents play a critical role in imparting moral values to their children. But in today's complex and fast-paced society, when parents must spend longer hours at work and more families are headed by a single parent, parents have less time to spend with their children—an average decrease of 22 hours a week over the past 30 years, according to a report released this spring by my Council of Economic Advisers. We must seek innovative ways to address this problem and to promote stronger families, including greater flexibility in paid work hours, more affordable child care, and increased support for low-income families.

My Administration is committed to providing families with the tools they need to fulfill their responsibilities at home and at work. Our agenda includes tripling our investment in after-school programs through the 21st Century Community Learning Center program and a historic initiative to make child care better, safer, and more affordable for working families. We are also working to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act to cover more workers and to allow leave for

more parental activities, such as parent-teacher conferences and routine doctor visits.

While Americans are striving to seize the opportunities presented by this exciting new era, we must continue to preserve the fundamental ideals and ethics that have sustained our country for more than two centuries. By sustaining these shared values and passing them on to our children, we can realize our common hope for a more just and honorable society and a brighter future for the generations to come.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 17 through October 23, 1999, as National Character Counts Week. I call upon the people of the United States, government officials, educators, religious, community, and business leaders, and the States to commemorate this week with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:37 a.m., October 19, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 20.

Remarks at a National Italian American Foundation Dinner

October 16, 1999

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. First of all, let me thank you for your warm welcome to Hillary and me. Thank you, Frank Guarini, for being my friend for all these years. Thank you, President Joe Cerrell. To all the distinguished guests here and the honorees, the Members of Congress, Gerry Ferrarro, Ambassador Foglietta, Ambassador Rosapepe. To our distinguished Italian guests, Maria Bartiromo, Ambassador Salles and, especially, Foreign Minister Dini.

I would like to say a special word of appreciation at this point to the Prime Minister and the Government of Italy for standing with us and working with us for the cause of our common humanity in Kosovo and, before that, in Bosnia. We could not have done it without Italy, and I am grateful.

Justice Scalia and Cardinal Hickey and all the others here—you stole my line about 50 percent of my four Chiefs of Staff being Italian. The other two wish they were. [Laughter] I thank you for all the gifts from Campania, including the beautiful flowers for Hillary. We visited there when the 1994 conference of the G-7 nations was held in Naples. And we have been very blessed by our times there. I understand my friend Dick Grasso and the Barnes & Noble CEO, Leonard Riggio, are both from that region of Italy. I'm about to go back to Florence, and I'm only supposed to stay a day, so if I play hooky and stay an extra day I want 3,000 of you to write an excuse for me, just like I used to get when I missed a day of school.

I guess I ought to say, since this is baseball season, that I'm sure of one person who would like to be here tonight who can't be is Joe Torre. Now, I'm not taking sides in the baseball series, but the Yankees do have two Italian-Americans on their team—Joe and the catcher, Joe Girardi. And no city in America has been better to me than Boston, but the Red Sox haven't had an Italian since their pitcher Frank Viola retired. So I think we ought to get the Red Sox an Italian baseball player to balance out our equal opportunity agenda through the country.

You know, from the beginning of our country, Italian-Americans have made invaluable contributions. And I want to say a special word of thanks, not for all those which I could litanize, and you know them, but for the National Italian American Foundation's leadership for our efforts to build one America.

I'm very grateful that this is a country in better shape than it was 7 years ago when I first came here. I am very grateful for the chance that I have had to serve. I'm grateful for the Italian-Americans who have helped to ensure the success of our administration. I'm glad that we have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years and the lowest welfare

rolls in 30 years and the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years and the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years.

But I have to tell you that the most important thing we have to do to get ready for the 21st century, even more important than our efforts to continue to grow our economy, is to build one country out of our diversity. If we do, if the American people really can come to have that wonderful balance which enables us to celebrate our diversity and our unique ethnic and religious traditions—which makes America a very interesting place to live—and still say our common humanity is even more important, we'll figure out how to deal with all the other things.

Last year, one of only 2 years I've missed since I first came here 7 years ago, I was up for 9 days and nights at the Wye Plantation trying to keep the Middle East peace process on track. If you look around the world at how I have spent my time as your President—working for peace in the Balkans, among Muslims and Croats and Serbs, among Albanian Muslim and Serbian Orthodox Christians; for peace in the Middle East, among Arabs and Jews, Palestinians, Syrians, Jordanians, and Lebanese; for peace in Northern Ireland among Catholics and Protestants; to set up protections against the kind of tribal slaughter we've seen in Africa among people who shared the same land, in one case in Rwanda, for 500 years.

It is truly interesting that at the dawn of this new millennium, when we're exhilarated by all these technological and scientific advances that are being made—one man told me that when I have grandchildren they may be born with a life expectancy of 100 years; we know that our kids are using the Internet and talking to people all over the world and knowing things we couldn't know—isn't it interesting that in this quintessentially modern era our biggest problem is the most primitive and ancient of human failings: the fear of the other, people who are different from us?

And what a short step it is from fearing people to hating them to dehumanizing them, which legitimizes doing away with them. And isn't it interesting that at a time when the crime rate in America is at a 26-year low, we still have these vicious examples

of a man shooting children at a Jewish community school, and then going out and murdering a Filipino postman; another man saying he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God, but did believe in white supremacy, killing an Africa-American basketball coach in Illinois and then murdering a young Korean Christian as he walked out of his church?

And all these other examples—the young gay man Matthew Shepard, a year ago this week being stretched out, literally, upon a rack; James Byrd being pulled apart in Texas because he was an African-American. Not because all Americans are like that—almost all of us aren't—but because in each of us there is this fragile scale, like the scale of justice Mr. Scalia must try to balance in his work. And in this scale we wake up every morning with some curious balance of light and dark, of hope and fear. And when the scale gets badly enough out of whack, the easiest thing to do is to strike out against the other.

So I say again to you, Italian-Americans have been subject to discrimination and bigotry in times past in America. You still are subject to stereotypes that I think are unfair and unrepresentative, to be kind about it. But it is because of the values you share with other Americans that we have a prosperous economy and a healing society. And we just have to remember that overall. Yes, I hope a lot of your children make hundreds of millions of dollars by starting Internet companies; yes, I hope that my plans to take care of the aging of America and save Social Security and Medicare will prevail; I hope our plans to elevate the quality of all of our schools will prevail; I hope I can convince both parties in Congress to resist temptation and save enough of this surplus to get us out of debt for the first time since 1835 over the next 15 years. I hope all of that. But remember this: The most important thing is to build one America out of this crazy quilt of all of us who live here.

Last week Hillary and I had the eighth of her Millennial Evenings at the White House. And we had an expert in the Internet, who helped to design the architecture of the Internet; and an expert in genomics, who

and the miracles it will bring. He says one day the intersection of computers and gene studies will enable us to put digital, microscopic digital pieces in all parts of the human body to do even the repair work on shattered nerves to the spine. And we talked about all the miracles out there.

And the genomics experts said, but what I want you to understand is that of all the possible permutations among people, with all many, many parts of every gene, 99.9 percent of us is identical to that of every other human being. And the genetic differences among groups—that is, individuals among the Italian community, for example—are more significant and greater than the aggregate average genetic differences between Italians and Irish and Africans and Latins. It's important to remember. For people of faith, it reflects the wisdom of our Creator.

So I say again, I'm indebted to you for many things—your work ethic, your family ethic, your creativity, your energy, your passion—it made America a much more interesting place and it fueled this remarkable run we have had. But your commitment to see that neither Italians nor any other human beings are subject to degradation and prejudice because of who they are, that we will learn to honestly and openly express our differences and enjoy our differences, but reaffirm our common humanity, make no mistake about it—just pick up the paper any day; look at the perils of the present day. We are in a conflict between modern possibility and primitive hatred. One America is the only answer, and you're leading the way.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:37 p.m. in the ballroom at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Frank J. Guarini, chairman, Joseph R. Cerrell, president, and Geraldine Ferraro, board member, National Italian American Foundation; U.S. Ambassador to Italy Thomas M. Foglietta; U.S. Ambassador to Romania James C. Rosapepe; Italian Ambassador to the U.S. Ferdinando Salleo; Minister of Foreign Affairs Lamberto Dini and Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema of Italy; CNBC journalist Maria Bartiromo, event emcee; James Cardinal Hickey, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Washington, DC; Richard Grasso, chairman and chief executive officer, New York Stock Exchange; and Joe Torre, manager, New York Yankees.

Statement on the 1998 Uniform Crime Report

October 17, 1999

The 1998 Uniform Crime Report released by the FBI today shows that serious crime has continued to fall in every region of our Nation for the seventh straight year. The murder rate is at its lowest since 1967. The overall violent crime rate is down, and gun crimes, rapes, robberies, assaults, and juvenile crime have all dropped to their lowest levels in over a decade. This is good news for America's families, and it shows we can indeed turn the tide on crime.

My administration's strategy of 100,000 more police, fewer guns in the hands of criminals, thanks to the Brady law, and more tools for communities to combat crime is working to make our streets safer and our communities stronger. But tragedies from Littleton to Los Angeles show that we must do more to protect our communities from gun violence. Even as crime falls, we must not let down our guard. That is why we must redouble our efforts to build on what works—by fully funding our COPS program to put more police on the street and by passing commonsense gun legislation to keep guns out of the wrong hands. Together we can make America the safest big nation in the world.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 15 but was embargoed for release until 6 p.m., October 17.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Economic Team and an Exchange With Reporters

October 18, 1999

Federal Budget

The President. Good morning. I have just completed a meeting with my economic team to see what we can do to reach overall budget agreement with the congressional leadership. In just 4 days, the resolution that temporarily funds the Government will expire. And yet, Congress still has not sent me a budget that maintains our fiscal discipline, pays down Social Security, reforms Medicare, and honors

the priorities of the American people, especially including education, and including 50,000 more community police for our children, for our streets, and a steadfast commitment to preserve and protect our environment.

Now, there is an overwhelming consensus across our country, and even here in Washington, that we face no challenge more critical than the education of our children. When our children graduate, they will be the largest and most diverse group of graduates in our history. They will be in a vastly more global and complex and information-dominated economy than ever before. For their sake, and the sake of our continued prosperity, we have wisely made—as a people—education our number one priority.

That means shrinking class size while increasing quality by fulfilling our commitment to put 100,000 teachers in the classroom—something the Republicans in Congress supported last year. It means making sure our children are ready for the year 2000 by ensuring that every one of them has access to computers in their classrooms. It means keeping schools open after school and during the summer. It means expanding mentoring and Head Start. It means having strategies that impose high standards and accountability, give schools funds to turn around themselves if they're failing, but shuts them down if they can't turn around. It means more funds for charter schools.

Now, if we're going to make these critical investments and maintain our fiscal discipline to keep our economy strong, we're going to have to make tough choices, and we're going to have to make them together. There are 4 days until the continuing resolution expires. Inaction is not an option. I will do everything I can to meet our priorities in a responsible way.

As I have said repeatedly in recent weeks, indeed, for years, my door is open to Members of both parties who are willing to work with us. If we're going to finish the job the American people sent us here to do—reach real results in educating our children, fighting crime, protecting our environment—then we have to put politics aside and seek common ground.

In that spirit, I am inviting the congressional leadership to come here and meet with me and our economic team at the White House, to see if we can agree on an overall budget framework. Yes, there are differences of opinion. But I don't think they're so great that we can't make progress by working together in a genuine bipartisan spirit. I'm committed to doing so and to resolving the remaining differences. If the congressional leadership will join me, we can make this a season of real progress for our people.

Thank you.

Spending Caps

Q. Sir, what about the spending caps on Social Security money? Are you willing to say before the congressional leadership comes here that you'll negotiate lifting the caps?

The President. Well, first of all, they've already been lifted. I mean, they have—they're into spending the Social Security surplus, and everyone but them—everybody else has acknowledged it. I mean, their own Congressional Budget Office says that. I have given them offsets. I will work with them with further offsets. I would like to see them do better on that.

But we can't not fund these critical education priorities. We can't not have an adequate environmental budget. And we can't not fulfill our responsibilities to the rest of the world. You know, I vetoed the foreign operations bill this morning because it seems to me to be the next big chapter in the new American isolationism, right after the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. There's no money to fund the Wye peace accord for peace in the Middle East; no money to fund our continuing work with the Russians to reduce their nuclear threat; no money to help us with debt relief to the poorest countries in Latin America and Asia; and several other problems.

So I think that—but on the other hand, according to Congressional Budget Office, they've already spent billions of dollars that are in the nongeneral revenue, or the Social Security revenue, portion of the surplus. I will work with them on offsets; I will work with them on getting a balanced budget out

of here that meets all of our Nation's priorities.

But we need to sit down and do it together. You know, we can continue this standoff, and I will fight for what I believe in, as I have ever since they took over Congress in 1995. But in the years where we have worked together—in '96 and '97 and '98—we've produced good results for the American people. And we ought to do that in 1999, and that's my commitment.

Continuing Resolution

Q. Is it inevitable that another continuing resolution will be necessary?

The President. I think probably, but it ought to be short. And, you know, what I want to do is to put all these bills together and see what the real critical differences are. I know they're not going to do 100 percent of what I want them to do. But there are certain bottom lines for the American people that I have, that I have to fight for. And we need to see how all this spending works together, and then do our best to agree on a responsible way to pay for it. And that's what I'd like to do.

And I'm not interested in being able to walk out of here and win a battle on whether they spent the Social Security surplus or not. As a matter of fact, they have, and it's been acknowledged for months, but that's not the point. The point is, we need a responsible budget here.

We're on a path to paying down America's debt. Because the tax cut was rejected, vetoed, we can still get America out of debt over the next 15 years. We can still extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund beyond the lifecycle of the baby boomers. And we can still have the funds to reform and modernize Medicare and meet these other priorities.

If you look over the 5-year period—if you look over the horizon, here—this country is moving in the right direction. And we shouldn't allow these momentary difficulties to deter us from doing what is right now, so we can keep on the right path.

Pakistan

Q. Mr. President, on Pakistan, what's your reaction to General Musharraf's speech yesterday? There's no indication of any timetable for moving toward elections, or for democracy.

The President. Well, a lot of what he said on the substance, including the conciliatory tone he took towards India, I thought was quite good. But I was quite disappointed that there was no commitment to a timetable to move toward democracy. And I certainly hope that will be forthcoming.

Carol Moseley-Braun Ambassadorial Nomination

Q. What do you think about Senator Helms' blocking Carol Moseley-Braun's nomination? Reported obstruction——

The President. Well, I hope he won't do that. You know, again, there has been an unprecedented amount of playing politics with Ambassadors, here. And again, it sends a signal to the rest of the world that there is a new isolationism in the country, that we don't really care whether we have Ambassadors in other places. We've got a hold on four other Ambassadors that—no one has questioned anything about their qualifications—for totally irrelevant reasons. And I think these things are not good for America.

So I would hope that Senator Moseley-Braun and the other Ambassadors would be quickly confirmed. And I will work as hard as I can to see that's done.

Support for Gore Campaign

Q. Does it bother you, sir, that Vice President Gore says he may decide he doesn't need your help in the campaign?

The President. No.

Q. Why not?

The President. Because he has to—I agree with him. I think he ought to make that decision at the time, based on the—for one thing, no one can help anyone else in the campaign beyond a certain point. You can make phone calls; you can go door-to-door; you can volunteer; you can call your friends.

But when I was Governor, I remember one of the best elections I ever had was in 1984, when President Reagan—who was at his all-time peak of popularity in 1984 and

got 62 percent of the vote, I think, running for reelection—came to my State to campaign against me, and I got the same vote he did.

And so—people are—elections, the American people know that in a representative form of government, they give the people that they vote for certain responsibilities. And then at election time, they're back in the driver's seat. So I think that that's a decision that we ought to make—or he ought to make—at an appropriate time, just—I agree with what he said about it.

And I also think that it won't matter who says it, as much as it matters what is said. I just want the American people to make this judgment based on what's best for them. Who is the most likely to continue to change this country in the right direction? Who's the most likely to save Social Security and Medicare? Who's the most likely to advance childhood education? Who's the most likely to grow the economy and protect the environment? Who's the most likely to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835? That's the only thing that matters.

This election is not about all the players that get written about in Washington. This election is about the American people. And they are perfectly happy to make the decision that is theirs every 4 years. And they will make it for themselves. And the candidates will be the major players; everybody else, to a greater or lesser degree, is in a subordinate role, as they always have been.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Thank you, pool. Thank you.

Relationship With Republican Congress

Q. [Inaudible]—with the Republican leadership heading into this budget showdown?

The President. Well, you know, I have always had a very cordial relationship with Senator Lott, and with Mr. Hastert since he's been there, the Speaker. And, you know, every Mr. DeLay came up here the other day for this adoption event, and we had a good visit. I wouldn't—you know, I don't agree with them on the substance of a lot of this.

But I don't—I've said this a hundred times. Let me say it one more time. I have

never, to the best of my knowledge, let political conflicts—even ones that had deeply personal overtones—get in the way of working with people who were also sent here. They were sent here just like I was, by the American people.

And this is not an emotional issue. This is a job. We've got a job to do for the American people. We were hired to do it, and we need to do it. And so I feel good about it. And I hope that they'll come down here, and I hope we can work together and work something out. I'll do my best.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Pakistani Gen. Pervez Musharraf, army chief of staff, who led a coup d'etat in Pakistan on October 12. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the "Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2000"
October 18, 1999

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 2606, the "Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2000."

The central lesson we have learned in this century is that we cannot protect American interests at home without active engagement abroad. Common sense tells us, and hard experience has confirmed, that we must lead in the world, working with other nations to defuse crises, repel dangers, promote more open economic and political systems, and strengthen the rule of law. These have been the guiding principles of American foreign policy for generations. They have served the American people well, and greatly helped to advance the cause of peace and freedom around the world.

This bill rejects all of those principles. It puts at risk America's 50-year tradition of leadership for a safer, more prosperous and democratic world. It is an abandonment of hope in our Nation's capacity to shape that

kind of world. It implies that we are too small and insecure to meet our share of international responsibilities, too shortsighted to see that doing so is in our national interest. It is another sign of a new isolationism that would have America bury its head in the sand at the height of our power and prosperity.

In the short term, H.R. 2606 fails to address critical national security needs. It suggests we can afford to underfund our efforts to keep deadly weapons from falling into dangerous hands and walk away without peril from our essential work toward peace in places of conflict. Just as seriously, it fails to address America's long-term interests. It reduces assistance to nations struggling to build democratic societies and open markets and backs away from our commitment to help people trapped in poverty to stand on their feet. This, too, threatens our security because future threats will come from regions and nations where instability and misery prevail and future opportunities will come from nations on the road to freedom and growth.

By denying America a decent investment in diplomacy, this bill suggests we should meet threats to our security with our military might alone. That is a dangerous proposition. For if we underfund our diplomacy, we will end up overusing our military. Problems we might have been able to resolve peacefully will turn into crises we can only resolve at a cost of life and treasure. Shortchanging our arsenal of peace is as risky as shortchanging our arsenal of war.

The overall funding provided by H.R. 2606 is inadequate. It is about half the amount available in real terms to President Reagan in 1985, and it is 14 percent below the level that I requested. I proposed to fund this higher level within the budget limits and without spending any of the Social Security surplus. The specific shortfalls in the current bill are numerous and unacceptable.

For example, it is shocking that the Congress has failed to fulfill our obligations to Israel and its neighbors as they take risks and make difficult decisions to advance the Middle East peace process. My Administration, like all its predecessors, has fought hard to promote peace in the Middle East. This bill

would provide neither the \$800 million requested this year as a supplemental appropriation nor the \$500 million requested in FY 2000 funding to support the Wye River Agreement. Just when Prime Minister Barak has helped give the peace process a jump start, this sends the worst possible message to Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians about America's commitment to the peace process. We should instead seize this opportunity to support them.

Additional resources are required to respond to the costs of building peace in Kosovo and the rest of the Balkans, and I intend to work with the Congress to provide needed assistance. Other life-saving peace efforts, such as those in Sierra Leone and East Timor, are imperiled by the bill's inadequate funding of the voluntary peacekeeping account.

My Administration has sought to protect Americans from the threat posed by the potential danger of weapons proliferation from Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union. But the Congress has failed to finance the Expanded Threat Reduction Initiative (ETRI), which is designed to prevent weapons of mass destruction and weapons technologies from falling into the wrong hands and weapons scientists from offering their talents to countries, or even terrorists, seeking these weapons. The bill also curtails ETRI programs that help Russia and other New Independent States strengthen export controls to avoid illicit trafficking in sensitive materials through their borders and airports. The ETRI will also help facilitate withdrawal of Russian forces and equipment from countries such as Georgia and Moldova; it will create peaceful research opportunities for thousands of former Soviet weapons scientists. We also cannot afford to underfund programs that support democracy and small scale enterprises in Russia and other New Independent States because these are the very kinds of initiatives needed to complete their transformation away from communism and authoritarianism.

A generation from now, no one is going to say we did too much to help the nations of the former Soviet Union safeguard their nuclear technology and expertise. If the funding cuts in this bill were to become law,

future generations would certainly say we did too little and that we imperiled our future in the process.

My Administration has also sought to promote economic progress and political change in developing countries, because America benefits when these countries become our partners in security and trade. At the Cologne Summit, we led a historic effort to enable the world's poorest and most heavily indebted countries to finance health, education, and opportunity programs. The Congress fails to fund the U.S. contribution. The bill also severely underfunds Multilateral Development Banks, providing the lowest level of financing since 1987, with cuts of 37 percent from our request. This will virtually double U.S. arrears to these banks and seriously undermine our capacity to promote economic reform and growth in Latin America, Asia, and especially Africa. These markets are critical to American jobs and opportunities.

Across the board, my Administration requested the funding necessary to assure American leadership on matters vital to the interests and values of our citizens. In area after area, from fighting terrorism and international crime to promoting nuclear stability on the Korean peninsula, from helping refugees and disaster victims to meeting its own goal of a 10,000-member Peace Corps, the Congress has failed to fund adequately these requests.

Several policy matters addressed in the bill are also problematic. One provision would hamper the Export-Import Bank's ability to be responsive to American exporters by requiring that the Congress be notified of dozens of additional kinds of transactions before the Bank can offer financing. Another provision would allow the Export-Import Bank to operate without a quorum until March 2000. I have nominated two individuals to the Bank's Board, and they should be confirmed.

A third provision could be read to prevent the United States from engaging in diplomatic efforts to promote a cost-effective, global solution to climate change. A fourth provision places restrictions on assistance to Indonesia that could harm our ability to influence the objectives we share with the Congress: ensuring that Indonesia honors the referendum in East Timor and that security is

restored there, while encouraging democracy and economic reform in Indonesia. Finally, this bill contains several sections that, if treated as mandatory, would encroach on the President's sole constitutional authority to conduct diplomatic negotiations.

In sum, this appropriations bill undermines important American interests and ignores the lessons that have been at the core of our bipartisan foreign policy for the last half century. Like the Senate's recent vote to defeat the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, this bill reflects an inexcusable and potentially dangerous complacency about the opportunities and risks America faces in the world today. I therefore am returning this bill without my approval.

I look forward to working with the Congress to craft an appropriations bill that I can support, one that maintains our commitment to protecting the Social Security surplus, properly addressing our shared goal of an America that is strong at home and strong abroad, respected not only for our leadership, but for the vision and commitment that real leadership entails. The American people deserve a foreign policy worthy of our great country, and I will fight to ensure that they continue to have one.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 18, 1999.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting the Nuclear
Regulatory Commission Report**

October 18, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 307(c) of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5877(c)), I transmit herewith the Annual Report of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which covers activities that occurred in fiscal year 1998.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 18, 1999.

**Remarks on Arrival in Newark,
New Jersey, and an Exchange
With Reporters**

October 18, 1999

Hurricane Floyd Disaster Relief Funding

The President. I want to begin my visit to New Jersey by announcing several steps our administration is taking, either today or previously over the weekend, to deliver Federal assistance to the citizens in the communities of New Jersey that were hurt and are recovering from the flood damage caused by Hurricane Floyd. We're doing all we can, and I hope these steps will help.

Earlier today, I directed the Department of Health and Human Services to release \$5 million in LIHEAP funds to New Jersey for energy-related damage caused by the hurricane. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program makes funds available for emergency use to help at-risk families in times of weather distress and in the aftermath of natural disasters. The State can use the funds for utility repairs, for furnace and air conditioning replacement, for the removal of damaged insulation, and for energy costs related to the crisis.

Initially over the weekend, the Department of Housing and Urban Development announced the early availability of approximately \$34 million in HUD community development block grants for the counties hit hardest by Hurricane Floyd. These expedited funds, which normally would have been released in January of 2000, can be used by communities now for disaster recovery and for repairs to both homes and businesses—I know this has been a big issue up here—as well as to water and sewer facilities.

Last, on Saturday the Federal Emergency Management Agency announced a lump sum rental assistance of up to \$10,000 for individuals whose homes were damaged in the hurricane. We will continue to do all we can to help, and I hope that these measures will be particularly helpful. I have been following this very closely. I know there's been a lot of concern up here, particularly from businesses who felt that they needed more help

than just the low-interest loans could provide. So I hope this early release of community development block grants will give them the help that they need.

Budget Negotiations

Q. Mr. President, do you expect Republicans to make any concessions at your budget summit tomorrow?

The President. Well, I don't know. What I would like to see is the return to the spirit of working together that we had in 1996 and 1997 and 1998. We had plenty of arguments, but we banded together in all those 3 years to pass good budgets. We passed the welfare reform; we passed the Balanced Budget Act of '97; and we passed the remarkable budget in 1998, that, among other things, contained the 100,000 teachers. In the balanced budget, we had the HOPE scholarships, which have opened the doors of college to virtually all Americans—first balanced budgets, back-to-back, in 42 years. So there has been this year something that I hoped we wouldn't have; there's been a return almost to the spirit they had in 1995. I don't understand that, and I thought that I did everything I could to reach out my hand to them early in the year to try to get the country back together, and I still hope we'll do that.

I still think that it's almost inexplicable that we're going through these really good times, and some people see good times as a luxury to indulge in division and diversion. To me, they impose an obligation to make the most of them. So you know, I'm just going to reach out a hand of friendship and hope that we can work together. We've done it on one of these bills, the VA/HUD bill—I think is quite a good bill, based on what I understand of it, and we can do it throughout, we can work through all of this if we just have the right attitude. I'm going to bring my right attitude to the meeting.

Vieques Island

Q. Sir, have you had a chance to consider the military's report on the Vieques Island?

The President. I have not. I think it's just been released. But I do know that Secretary Cohen said that he wanted to have further discussions and to try to talk to the leaders down in Puerto Rico, which is what I think

ought to be done. The best of all worlds here would not only reach a good result, but it would reach a good result in a good way, and we would have a process which would restore a sense of trust and partnership between Puerto Rico and the Pentagon. An enormous number of Puerto Ricans have served with great distinction in the American Armed Forces, and to have the whole island, starting with the Governor and Congressman Romero-Barceló feel estranged from the Pentagon, not only over this but over the way the memorandum of understanding has developed since 1983, I think is a very bad thing.

So it may be that something good can come from this, and I think the fact that Secretary Cohen wants to actively reach out to the Governor and to that committee that has been appointed down there and have further discussions with them before making some sort of final recommendation to me is quite a good thing, and that's what I'm looking forward to.

Hurricane Floyd Disaster Relief Funding

Q. Mr. President, a lot of the frustration of the people in New Jersey over the flood situation is that—a lot of them have said this to me—is that when natural disasters occur, one, they're given grants very quickly, but they're saying, "Hey, here we are in the United States and we have to deal with loans, SBA loans, and keep waiting and waiting."

The President. That's why I gave this community development block grant money early. Because this money can be used as grants to do this kind of work. And I've been following this very closely. We spend a lot of money, if you will, in grants in America, but most of it is in repairing public facilities and in helping people get through immediate emergencies, which is about all we can do overseas as well. But under unusual circumstances, we've seen this in other places.

In North Dakota, when they had that terrible flood, you remember in Grand Forks, we were able to release some community development block grant funds, which they were able to use not only for individuals but also for businesses who were so devastated that the low-interest loans were not enough.

So I'm hoping that this announcement I've made today will respond directly to what I have heard from the people of New Jersey needs to be done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:37 p.m. at Newark International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Pedro Rosselló of Puerto Rico. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a New Jersey Democratic Assembly Dinner in Elizabeth, New Jersey

October 18, 1999

Thank you. Well, first of all, ladies and gentlemen, let me say I'm delighted to be here in Ray Lesniak's humble home. *[Laughter]* It's a beautiful place; we have a beautiful tent. It's a gorgeous New Jersey evening. When I got out of the airplane at the Newark airport and I looked up in the sky, it was just so beautiful. And I was so glad to be here.

I thank Representative Menendez for being here and for his friendship and support and his representation of you in the Congress. I thank Mayor Bollwage for hosting us; and my good friend Mayor Sharpe James, who is the only big city mayor in America who's also in the State Assembly—in the State Senate—it's liable to start a trend—*[laughter]*—which if you're a Democrat would be a very good thing to do. *[Laughter]* So, Sharpe, I think at the next mayors' conference you ought to suggest to all of our other mayors they should run for the State Senate or the State Assembly; it would be a good thing.

Chairman Giblin, thank you for your work. Senator Codey, Assemblywoman Weinberg, and to all the other members of the Assembly here, all the other mayors that are here. Mr. Corzine, thank you for being here and for offering yourself for public office.

I got tickled, you know, I'm always learning about New Jersey, and I love it. What Ray didn't say was that we had the biggest improvement in our vote in the margin of victory from '92 to '96 in New Jersey of any State in the entire United States of America. And I am so very grateful for that.

So here's what I learned about New Jersey politics tonight. Lesniak, the Pole—*[laughter]*—introduces Bob Janiszewski. Doria, the Italian, pronounces it properly and calls him Janiszewski. *[Laughter]* Now, that's because if you're not in the family you've got to be politically correct—*[laughter]*—but if you are, you want to say the guy's name in the way that can get the most votes. *[Laughter]* It was fascinating, I loved it.

Let me say, I met—you know, Bob had me, in October of 1991, 8 years ago this month, to the Hudson County Democratic dinner. And I was hoarse, I could barely talk. I thought, you know, I saw this guy and I didn't know whether he was going to bounce me out of the room or put his arm around me—and as strong as he is, I might not survive either one. *[Laughter]* And I wanted so badly to make a good impression, I couldn't even talk. Maybe that's why most of the people there supported me; I don't know. *[Laughter]*

But since then, the friendships that I have enjoyed here, the support that I have received from here and the opportunity we've had to work together has meant more to me than I can say. And you've been so good to me, to the Vice President, to our family in the administration. I just can't thank you enough.

You might ask—Joe said, well, I'm the only President that ever came here for the Assembly candidates. Now, if I were running for reelection you might understand that. What am I doing here tonight? Well, if Ray Lesniak asked me to empty my bank account—meager, though, it is—fly to Alaska to meet him tomorrow morning, I'd probably do it. I feel deeply indebted to him, and I'm glad his wonderful family is here tonight.

But I came here tonight not only out of a sense of gratitude and indebtedness to people like Joe and so many others here who have helped me over the years, but also because I think this is quite important. And I'd like to ask you just to take a few minutes with me and think about where our country has come from, where we are now, and where we're going, and how these Assembly races fit into it.

You know, when I ran for President in 1992, it's almost impossible to remember

what the country was like. We had high unemployment, stagnant growth, stagnant wages; we had increasing social division, crime was up, welfare was up, all the social problems were up; we had had serious incidents of civil disobedience out in Los Angeles; we had political gridlock in Washington. Our country was divided, and there was no unifying vision that would bring the people together.

And it seemed to me that someone ought to run—and at the time, the incumbent President, Mr. Bush, was at over 70 percent approval in the polls, in the aftermath of the Gulf war. But it seemed to me that somebody ought to run and say, “Look, this country is going through a lot of changes, and we have a lot of challenges and a lot of opportunities. And we’re not going to either meet the challenges or seize the opportunities unless we have a vision that will bring us together and move us forward.”

And so I went around the country. I declared—to show you how much frontloaded this process has become, I didn’t even declare for President until this month, in 1991. This race has been going on ever since my daughter was in diapers, for—this year I think. [Laughter] And I said, “Look, I believe we need to bring this country together around a set of simple values and new ideas: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans. I believe we need to look to the future and understand that we can get rid of this deficit and still invest in education, that we can protect the environment and still grow the economy, that we can help labor and business. And that all these either/or choices that have been put on us from Washington for years and years and years will not get us where we want to go.”

I also said I thought we needed a new set of partnerships in America between Government and business and labor, and between the Federal Government and the State and local government. We needed to focus on empowering our citizens to make the most of their own lives and challenging them to serve in whatever way they could.

All these things were just arguments in ’92. And luckily for me and the Vice President, the country gave us a chance. They said,

“Okay, we heard your argument; we’ll give you a chance.” But it’s not an argument now. There’s evidence; the results are in. And after nearly 7 years in office, we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, 19½ million new jobs, the highest homeownership ever, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years, the lowest murder rate in 32 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years. And we’ve reduced the size of the Federal Government. It’s the smallest it has been in 37 years. It’s not an argument anymore; we’re going in the right direction.

And along the way, we proved you didn’t have to give up other things—the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer. We’ve set aside more land and protected it than any administration in the history of this country, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. We’ve immunized 90 percent of our children against serious diseases for the very first time. A hundred and fifty thousand young Americans have now served in AmeriCorps. The HOPE scholarship and other financial aid have virtually opened the doors of college to all Americans who are willing to work for it. And 15 million Americans have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law.

Now, the question before America in the elections of 1999 and 2000 is, what are we going to do now? Where are we going now? Are we going to say, “Well, we’re doing so well, we can indulge ourselves in petty politics and meanness and just power positioning of the moment”? Or are we going to say, “Hey, this is the chance of a lifetime. Once in a lifetime a country is in this kind of shape—a great country, leading the world—and we have to use this once in a lifetime chance to basically build the 21st century of our dreams for our children and our grandchildren and for a safer and more prosperous world”?

In order to do that, we have to challenge the American people, and you have to challenge the people of New Jersey to think big and to be big. I know what I think the big challenges are. And when I tell you, you’ll see why I’m here tonight.

One, we have to take care of the aging of America. The number of people over 65 in this country will double in the next 30 years. I hope to live to be one of them. [Laughter] When that happens, there'll only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. So meeting the challenges of the aging of America requires us to do a number of things.

Number one, to save Social Security and stretch out the life of the Trust Fund until it encompasses a life expectancy of all the baby boomers. That's worth fighting for.

Number two, to save and reform Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit. To let people between the ages of 55 and 65 buy into Medicare, because people who lose their health insurance at that age almost never find another job with the same sort of health care guarantees. We ought to have a long-term care tax credit—that's a tax cut I wish my Republican friends would embrace, because so many families are having to take care of their parents or disabled relatives in long-term care.

The second thing we've got to do is meet the challenge of our children. We have more children from more diverse backgrounds by far than at any time in our history, in State after State after State—not just in places like New Jersey and New York and California. My State, Arkansas, is one of the top two States in America in the percentage growth of Hispanic children in our schools. Our whole country is becoming more diverse. And yet, we know that while we have the best system of colleges and universities in the world, we do not give all of our children a world-class education.

We need higher standards, and we need more support. If we're going to have no social promotion—which I favor—we also should have summer school and after-school programs for the kids who need it; 100,000 teachers for smaller classes, which gives great results, and every classroom in this country should be hooked up to the Internet. And we ought to build or modernize thousands and thousands of schools. And if my initiative passed, we could help you get that done here in New Jersey.

So, the aging of America and the children of America; the third big challenge we have

is to help the families of America in an age where almost everybody with children is also working. I think we need to broaden the reach of the family leave law. I think we need to toughen the enforcement of equal pay for equal work—it is still not a reality; women still don't get equal pay, and that is very, very important. I'm the only guy that I know made less money than his wife every year we were married until I became President. [Laughter] This is something I'm doing for the rest of you. [Laughter] I feel very strongly about it.

We ought to pass the patients' protection bill. We ought to do more for child care for working families. We ought to raise the minimum wage. These things are important. We ought to expand health care coverage, especially to children of lower income working people.

The fourth thing we've got to do, I believe, is to set as a national goal that we're going to make America the safest big country in the world. Yes, the crime rate is the lowest in 26 years. That's good. The murder rate is the lowest in 32 years. In spite of these horrible school shootings, children are less likely to be killed today than they were 7 years ago. I'm proud of that. But does anybody seriously believe this country is as safe as it ought to be? And if it's not, why should we stop until America is the safest big country in the world?

Now, I have a proposal to put 50,000 more police on the street—the first 100,000 did a good job—and to put them in the highest crime areas of the country. The Democrats in Washington, we're trying to pass proposals for reasonable gun restriction, for child safety locks, for closing the gun show loophole, which has no background checks at gun shows and urban flea markets, and doing a number of other things. But we shouldn't stop; we shouldn't say we're satisfied with where it is, because we shouldn't be.

The next thing we ought to do is to make this economy work for all Americans. You know as well as I do that right here in New Jersey there are people and places that have not been touched by this economic recovery. We've worked very hard on this. The Vice President has run our remarkably successful empowerment zone program. But we want

to double the number of those empowerment zones, and we want to make sure that with our new markets initiative that people who have money to invest get the same financial incentives to invest in poor neighborhoods in America we give them to invest in poor neighborhoods in Latin America, in Africa, in Asia, and throughout the world. Because people here who want to go to work ought to have a chance. If we don't do something now, when our economy is so prosperous and when our unemployment rate is so low to give people who don't have work the chance to have it, we will never get around to it. Now is the time to do that.

Let me just say one other thing, maybe in some ways the biggest idea of all. People are asking me all the time if we've repealed the business cycle, because we now have the longest peacetime expansion in history. We haven't. But one of the things we know is that if we keep an open economy and we keep competing and this technological revolution continues and we educate more and more of our people, we'll do better. But you all know that one of the reasons we're doing better is because we took a \$290 billion deficit and turned it in to \$115 billion surplus, and that drove down interest rates and it increased investment; it increased jobs; it increased incomes; it lowered home mortgage rates; it lowered college loan rates; it lowered car interest payment rates and credit card rates. It made us more prosperous.

If my plan in Washington is adopted, to save Social Security and Medicare, it will enable us to pay down the debt over the next 15 years, so that 15 years from now this country could be out of debt for the very first time since—listen to this—Andrew Jackson was President in 1835. Now, why should the nominally more liberal party be for getting us out of debt? Because it's good for poor people who want jobs; it's good for middle class people who want affordable credit; it will give us a stronger, longer-running prosperity. And when we do get into trouble, it won't be nearly as bad as it otherwise would have been. And I hope every Democrat will stand up for that and stick up for that. That's why I vetoed that Republican tax bill, because we never would have gotten out of debt and we wouldn't have had any money

left to invest in education and health care and the environment.

I'll just mention two other things real briefly, because they don't bear on you quite so much. One is, I think the most important thing we can do is keep working to build one America, to keep working to reach across the lines that divide us. The more complicated, the more diverse we get, the more we ought to be lifting up and celebrating our differences—and making a little fun of them, like I did tonight—[laughter] and enjoying it, but also reaffirming our common humanity.

When you see all these hate crimes we have—Matthew Shepard killed in Wyoming because he was gay; James Byrd dragged apart in Texas because he was black; a Filipino postal worker shot in California by a man who just got through shooting at Jewish children at a Jewish community school; an African-American basketball coach and a young Korean Christian killed walking out of his church in the Middle West by a man who belonged to a church that said he didn't believe in God, he believed—the church believed in white supremacy.

When you see all this stuff it is just sort of the most egregious example in America of the problems that all of us have in looking at people who are different from us and feeling fear or misunderstanding. And when those things are not dealt with, they can lead quite easily to hatred, which can lead to dehumanization, which in the most egregious examples, can lead to killing. And it's not just America; it's all over the world. What am I working on in the Middle East or Ireland; or to try to stop tribal wars in Africa; or in Bosnia and Kosovo. All over the world, we are still on the verge of this most modern of ages. We're bedeviled by fear of the other.

We had a fascinating—Hillary has organized eight different Millennium Evenings at the White House, where we bring in brilliant people to come talk about various things and then put it out over the Internet, all over the country and all over the world. Last week we had two guys come in and talk; it was the most fascinating thing you ever saw. One of them helped to develop the architecture of the Internet. The other one was an expert in the human genome project. And they

talked about how computers made it possible to unlock the mystery of the human genes and together would make it possible to do things like put little computer chips in any part of our body that's broken someday and have the chip emit electronic impulses which would, for example, take the place of damaged nerves. It was fascinating.

But what the geneticist said is interesting. He said that all human beings, from a genetic point of view, are 99.9 percent the same. And that the genetic differences among groups of people—that is, within them—are greater than the genetic differences of the group as a whole with any other group. So that among Poles, Italians, Latinos, and African-Americans, within each of those groups, the genetic differences are different than on average the genetic differences of one group are from another. We have got to get over this notion that we define our lives in terms of being better than somebody who is in some other group. And it's a huge issue.

The last thing I want to say—you mentioned the test ban treaty. I have done everything I could from the first day I got here to try to lead the world to a point where we could take advantage of the good things going on and beat back the threats of tomorrow. What are the threats? The spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons; the growth of terrorism, organized crime, and drug running and the groups working more and more together. What are the opportunities? Expanding trade, expanding communications.

One of my big struggles with the Congress is that they don't agree with a lot of this. But I just want you to know one thing about the test ban treaty. Everybody is for it when you hear about it. Then they can get a lot of people to say, "Well, I don't know if I'm for it because," they say, "why should America sign a nuclear test ban treaty when other people can cheat?"

The answer is, the treaty makes it harder to cheat. Because if we get the treaty, we get over 300 super-sophisticated sensors that we put out all over the world, in all the critical places, which catch people cheating. If we don't sign it, it's harder and harder to know whether people are testing or not; and even if they do, they're not violating any rules—because we walked away.

Now, that's what I think. Deal with the aging of America; deal with the children of America; deal with the families of America; makes us the safest big country in the world; get us out of debt, and give poor people a chance to be a part of this economy; make us one America, and keep leading the world. That's what I think.

Now, look at the Republicans' position. On Social Security, they have an act to save Social Security or reform Medicare, and they say there won't be any prescription drug benefit this year. On education, they're against voluntary tests; they're against our no-social-promotion policy; they won't give us 100,000 teachers; and they sure won't give us any funds to help you to build or modernize your schools. On the family issues, they're against expanding family leave; they haven't supported equal pay; they're sure against the Patients' Bill of Rights, the leadership; and they haven't helped us expand child care. On the crime issue, they were against putting 100,000 police on the street, and they're against putting 50,000 more. And you know where they are on the gun issues. On the economy, the tax cut would have taken away the possibility of getting us out of debt. On one America, they're against the hate crimes bill, the employment nondiscrimination bill. And on world leadership, it's not just the comprehensive test ban; they won't pay our U.N. dues; they're against our doing our part to combat climate change; and they're against adequately funding our national security. I vetoed a bill today for foreign operations which doesn't have any money to meet our obligations to the Middle East peace process, any money to increase our efforts to diminish the nuclear threats that still exist in Russia, any money to help pay off the debts of the poor countries that the Pope and everybody else has begged the rich countries of the world to do in the year 2000.

Now, what has all this got to do with the New Jersey Assembly? Plenty. Because if you look at these things—the children, the seniors, the families, whether the economy works, how the education system works, whether we've got safe streets, and whether we're coming together instead of drifting apart—a lot of that work is done at the State level. Joe has already talked about it but, you

know, I'm proud to come here because you're trying to pass a meaningful patients' protection bill that not only has the right to sue but also has an ombudsman to look over how the managed care system works.

Now, I have a right to say this because I have never condemned managed care, *per se*. But do you know when I proposed the Patients' Bill of Rights, 43 managed care companies came to me and said, "Mr. President, we're interested in these principles; we think they ought to be the law; but you don't understand—you have got to pass a law, because if we try to do this on our own, we'll lose our shirt if our competitors undercut us. They'll take all the healthy people and not charge them anything and leave us with all the problems. There needs to be a law here."

I'm here because New Jersey's Democrats are trying to pass child-proof gun legislation, which is very important. I'm here because you believe in progressive, not regressive, taxation—and I know about your fight there—and because of what you've done in education. Keep in mind, this only works if there is a partnership.

Now, my Republican predecessors talked a lot about partnerships, but we have eliminated more regulations on the State—two-thirds of all the Department of Education regulations. We have turned over more programs to the State than my two predecessors combined. But if it's going to work, you have to have the right people in the State government.

So I ask you, again, think about what you want the new century to look like for your kids and your grandkids. Think about the obligation we have with this chance of a lifetime. Do what you can to stick with us nationally, but also at the State level. And if you do what you ought to do in these elections, you will send a loud message to America that we are moving in the right direction for tomorrow.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. in an outdoor tent at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to State Senator Raymond J. Lesniak, dinner host; Mayor J. Christian Bollwage of Elizabeth; Mayor Sharpe James of Newark, NJ; Thomas Giblin, chairman, and Robert C. Janiszewski, Hudson County chairman, Demo-

cratic State Committee; State Senator Richard J. Codey; State Assembly members Loretta Weinberg and Joseph V. Doria, Jr., who introduced the President; and Jon Corzine, former chief executive officer, Goldman Sachs.

Remarks to the Voices Against Violence Conference

October 19, 1999

Thank you. Good morning. I think Rebecca Hunter did a wonderful job with her pledge and with her introduction, don't you? Let's give her another hand. I thought she was great. *[Applause]*

I would like to begin by thanking our House Democratic leader, Dick Gephardt, and all others who were involved in this Voices Against Violence meeting. I want to thank Congressmen Frost, Bonior, DeLauro, Clement, and Menendez, who are over here to my left. And I see Representative Capps out there—there may be more Members of Congress here. I thank all of them for being here.

I would like to thank our Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, who came with me; Jeff Bleich, who runs our national grassroots campaign against youth violence. And I'd like to thank Ananda Lewis of MTV and all the other organizations who are working to help make this a safer place for all of you. I thank the parents, the teachers, and the chaperons who came here with you today.

But most of all, I came here to say thank you to all of you for taking responsibility, taking a stand in raising your voices against violence.

I also have to say that this is a good day for me for you to be here because I know a lot of you have been trained in conflict resolution, and I'm meeting with the leaders of the Congress this afternoon, the Republicans and the Democrats, to try to resolve our conflict over the budget. *[Laughter]* And if I don't do so well, I may keep some of you in Washington for an extra day or 2 to help me. I think that would be a good idea.

Actually, we do agree on things from time to time. Later today I'm going to sign legislation that will make good our common commitment to veterans, housing, science and technology, and to a part of what I call my

new markets initiative, to give economic opportunity to the poor parts of America where our recovery has not reached.

And now we have to finish the rest of the budget. The most important thing to me and to all of us is that we do a good job on education. It has got to be the number one priority for our country for the new century. We have the largest and most diverse student population we have ever had. It poses new challenges for us, but it gives America an unprecedented opportunity.

So I want you to see what we want to do about youth violence in the larger context of what I believe should be our commitment to give you the best possible education and the best possible future that any children have ever had in the history of our country.

We're trying to put 100,000 teachers in our classrooms for smaller classes. We're trying to build or modernize 6,000 schools, because so many kids are in house trailers and broken-down old schools today, because there are so many more schoolchildren than we've ever had before. We're trying to make sure that by the end of next year we have hooked up every classroom in America to the Internet. We're trying to provide funds for summer school and after-school programs, funds to turn around schools that aren't doing a good job, more efforts to mentor young people in middle school to get them ready to go on to college.

We're also fighting for funds for health care and the environment and for more community police officers. And we're doing it in a way that will enable us to do something else you should care about, which is to save Social Security and Medicare when the so-called baby boom generation retires, and then there will only be about two people your age working for every one person retired. And it's very important that we use this moment, here, where we're prosperous, to protect your future.

Most of us who are in the baby boom generation are panicked by the thought that when we retire, we'll impose a big burden on your generation and your ability to raise your kids. So we're determined to avoid that, and we can.

And finally, let me say, from the time I was your age until today, our country has al-

ways been in debt—and over the last 10 or 12 years, increasingly so, before I became President. We've got a chance to get this country out of debt over the next 15 years, to make America debt-free for the first time since 1835, and I hope we will do that.

I've been asking all the American people, including our young people, to imagine the future and to recognize that our country has a certain, unique moment here, when we've got a lot of prosperity and when our problems have been laid bare for us for all to see by tragic instances, like the instance at Columbine. But it's not the only kind of violence young people are subjected to. They're also subjected to hate crimes: Matthew Shepard being killed in Wyoming; the children shot at, at the Jewish community center; and then the Filipino postal worker murdered; the young Korean killed in the Middle West by the guy on the hate crime spree who also killed the African-American former basketball coach at Northwestern.

So when you have all these opportunities out there and you have your problems laid bare, and you have the strength of the country and the prosperity of the country giving us the confidence to deal with them, what I hope you will say to everybody here and when you go back home is, America will never have a better time to face its biggest problems; America will never have a better time to save all of its children. And that is what I think we ought to be thinking about.

You heard Congressman Gephardt say that our crime rate has been going down 7 years in a row. That's the first time that's happened for over 40 years. The overall crime rate is the lowest it has been in 26 years; the murder rate is the lowest it has been in more than 30 years. That sounds great, and I'm proud of that. And I'm glad we've worked on that. But does anybody think America is as safe as it ought to be? No. Of course not, obviously.

Six months after Columbine—tomorrow, 6 months after Columbine, no serious person believes that America is as safe as it ought to be. And every day, every day we lose more than a dozen kids to violence. They die in ones and twos, so we don't see them on the evening news; we don't see their names blared in headlines.

So why don't you help us adopt a real goal? Why don't we, together, say that we're going to make America the safest big country in the world in the 21st century, starting with making our children safe? You can do that, and that's what I want to do.

We need an organized way in every community in America to capture the spirit that brought you to Washington this week. We need people working on specific things. I thought Rebecca Hunter's pledge was great. You just think about it. If every young person in every high school and junior high school in America took the pledge that she stated and acted on it, violence would go down. At least violence perpetrated by young people would go down.

I want you to help us while you're here. What else can we do? How do we make our schools sanctuaries of safety? How do we recognize the early warning signs of violence? How do we teach people to resolve their differences peacefully? How do we share good ideas from one community to another? How can people who are injured find it in their hearts to forgive people they've been angry at, instead of trying to get even? These are very important questions.

It seems to me there is no quick-fix solution, and what we have to do in Washington is to try to give you the tools and the framework and as safe as possible condition to do this work. But our young people have to be reached one by one. In many ways, all of you can have more influence on your peers than I can as President, or than any of us can. We can try, but you can make all the difference.

I also would like to say that I think that this conference has to recognize that there are things that you can do and things that we have to do and that we have some obligations here to understand the problem of youth violence in the environment as a greater violent level of our community. And let me just mention a few things. Mr. Gephardt mentioned a couple of them before, but when I took office, almost 7 years ago now, I had spent a lot of time going from community to community, walking the streets with police officers and with community leaders, sitting and listening to young people talk about the violence in their streets. I'll never

forget, I was in California one time—this was way—8 or 9 years ago—and this young person in a grade school told me what it was like when they had a drive-by shooting at random, and all the kids had to get out of their desks and hit the floor. And I've listened to people talk to me about this stuff.

And I asked the Congress to do what the local people told me would help to lower crime. So we put more community policing programs out there; we passed the Brady bill; we banned assault weapons. We did a lot of things that were good, and we supported local community initiatives. We had a zero tolerance for guns in school policy.

And as I said, it is working, and that is good. But now I think we have to do some more things. I also should say that all these people here in our caucus who supported all those crime policies took a lot of heat for doing it, because we were told that—the NRA told everybody we were going to take their guns away and they couldn't go hunting anymore. Well, everybody's still hunting, but it's a safer country, and we're still having the same argument up here.

We held the first-ever school safety conference at the White House, and we gave over \$100 million in safe school grants to schools and communities to help them fight youth violence. We started mentoring programs to help kids know that if they stayed in school and stayed out of trouble, they could actually go on to college. And after the terrible wave of violence culminating in Columbine, I launched a new White House Youth Violence Council to coordinate our work throughout all the Government agencies.

Now, today we are going to release at the Government level—this makes the very point I made to you in the beginning about why I'm glad you're here—today we're going to release our second annual report on school safety. The Secretary of Education has done wonderful work on this. It shows that, once again, the vast majority of our schools are safe. It also shows they're getting safer, which is a tribute to you and to your teachers. Homicides in schools remain rare. Crimes are down both in and out of school, and there are now far fewer students carrying weapons

to schools than there were 6 years ago. That's the good news.

The bad news is we've had Columbine, Jonesboro, Springfield, Pearl—I could go on and on—all the places where there have been these horrible examples of school violence. We know that more and more students feel unsafe. So I want to say to you that—again, I say, I want you to help us with new ideas. But I want to tell you what we're doing now, up here. And then I want to close and ask you to think about something for the rest of the time you're here.

First of all, we want to do more to help you reach other people. Our Justice Department and the Education Department worked with MTV to provide a youth action guide and a CD that focused on concrete steps to reduce youth violence, such as mentoring, conflict resolution, and youth advocacy. I want to thank the Recording Industry Association of America for their help in putting this CD together. We've already distributed over a quarter of a million, over 250,000 of these CDs. Today the Justice Department is going to send out 200,000 more to organizations around the country—after school programs, law enforcement agencies, foundations, and civic groups.

Now, this CD basically sounds a call for action. It's a commonsense tool that helps to make a difference if it's put in the right hands, the hands of people like you. And we're doing our part. But let me also say, to again echo what Mr. Gephardt said, we need Congress to help us. Especially, we need Congress to help us to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

Now, I've heard all this talk with—people say it doesn't really matter whether we do anything about guns. All I know is, we passed the Brady bill. We've kept 400,000 people with criminal backgrounds from buying handguns since 1994, and we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years. I don't believe the things are unrelated.

And one of the real problems with the Brady bill is there is a loophole: If you buy a gun at a gun show or in urban flea markets, they don't have to do a background check on you. So we want to close that. We also want to ban the import of large ammunition

clips. And we want to require child-safety locks.

Let me just give you this statistic to think about—you want to be against unintentional violence as well as intentional violence—the accidental death rate of children from guns in America—the accidental death rate—listen to this—is 9 times higher than the rates for the next 25 biggest industrial countries combined. You take the next 25 biggest economies and put them all together, our accidental death rate from guns is 9 times higher than all of them put together.

So we should do more to create an environment in which we will be more safe, that will help you when you're trying to get kids to sign the pledge, when you're trying to solve the conflicts in your schools. I also believe it's very important for Congress to pass this hate crimes legislation which makes it explicitly criminal to attack people because of their racial, their religious, or their sexual orientation. I think it is very, very important.

Now, last night the Republicans on the relevant committees removed important hate crimes protection from a bill that had already passed the Senate. And they tried to kill this bill when we weren't watching, but now we're watching this morning. I want to ask you also to speak up for that, and that's the last point I want to make.

This hate crimes legislation is important because—why? It embodies what I think is the biggest challenge facing not only our society but societies all over the world. The great thing about the modern world is we've got a lot of movement across national borders. A lot of you have probably been on the Internet talking to people in other countries. And when I look ahead to your future, I see a time when we'll have these unbelievable scientific discoveries. And your children, literally, may be born with a life expectancy of about 100 years. We're unlocking the secrets of the human gene. And you will be, literally, able to not only be American citizens but citizens of the world in ways that no one else has ever been, even if you don't travel beyond your home county, because of the way the Internet is working to bring us together. That's the good news.

The bad news is that the same demons that lead people to commit racial and religious and sexual orientation-related crimes and discrimination in America are sweeping the world in more violent ways. Basically, the conflict in Northern Ireland is a religious conflict. The conflict in the Middle East is an ethnic and religious conflict. The conflicts in Kosovo and Bosnia were ethnic and religious conflicts. The brutal killings in Africa were tribal conflicts. All over the world, people are getting into modern technology, but they're behaving as if they lived 1,000 or 2,000 or 3,000 years ago, because they're afraid of people who are different from them still.

Don't you think that's interesting, that you live in the most modern of all worlds, and yet the biggest problem we've got is the oldest problem of human society, people being scared of people who are different from them? And you can help that.

I had, last week, at the White House—really my wife had this meeting, and I just went along for the ride. But she sponsored this lecture by a man who helped to create the infrastructure of the Internet and a man who knows more than nearly anybody in America about the human genome project, the breaking down of the component parts of the genes, and how it fits in the body. And they talked about how we were going to be able to solve all these health problems by merging computer technology and what we know about genetics.

But let me tell you what the genome specialist said. He said—now listen to this—look around this room, all the different kinds of people that are in this room. He said that 99 percent of us—99.9 percent of each of our bodies is identical to the other. We are 99.9 percent the same genetically. Even more interesting, he said, if you take two ethnic groups, there are more differences in the gene structures within the ethnic groups than there are between the ethnic groups. That is, if you take, let's say, a group of Hispanic kids and a group of Asian kids, there will be more differences within the group than what you average out what the genetic makeup is between the Hispanics and the Asians.

We're getting a message here. Science is reaffirming what our values tell us. And I'm

telling you, if you all can do something about violence and fear and the compulsive alienation of so many of our young people—which turns into their need to look down on people and eventually dehumanize them and eventually think it's okay to act violently against them—if you can deal with that, it's the oldest problem of human society—if you can deal with that, you're going to have the brightest future of any generation of Americans.

You will have a chance to solve diseases, to solve poverty problems, to give people potential that they never would have had before. But the whole thing can be held down by the failure to deal with our violent impulses, which are the product of our most deep-seated fears. So think about that.

If you want to live in the new world of the 21st century, you've got to help people get rid of their old hatreds and old fears. We'll do our part, and we're very proud of your leadership in doing yours.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in the Cannon Caucus Room at the Cannon House Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Rebecca Hunter, a student from Nashville, TN, who introduced the President; Jeffrey Bleich, Executive Director, National Campaign Against Youth Violence; and Ananda Lewis, host of MTV's "HotZONE." The conference, entitled, Voices Against Violence: A Congressional Teen Conference, was sponsored by House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt and the House Democratic caucus.

Statement on the Social Security Administration Cost-of-Living Adjustment

October 19, 1999

Today the Social Security Administration announced the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for next year's benefits. This announcement is a reminder that for over 60 years, Social Security has been a cornerstone of American national policy that has enabled generations of Americans to retire with dignity. Each year millions of disabled and elderly Americans are lifted out of poverty by Social Security. As a result, poverty rates among the elderly are at the lowest level ever

recorded. The cost-of-living adjustment announced today ensure that Social Security benefits will continue to be an essential part of retirement and family security for all Americans.

This year we have an historic opportunity to protect and strengthen Social Security, securing it for future generations of retirees. At a minimum, we should agree on a down-payment on reform by passing a Social Security lockbox that extends the life of Social Security to about 2050 and pays down the debt by 2015. I remain committed to working with Congress to move forward in this area.

Statement on Senate Action To Block Campaign Finance Reform Legislation

October 19, 1999

Once again, a minority in the Senate has blocked bipartisan campaign finance reform. The failure of the Senate to adopt real reform is a victory for the politics of cynicism, and it leaves unchecked the influence of moneyed special interests. I will not let the Senate's inaction deter us from our goal, which is to restore the public's faith in our political system. That is why I will continue to fight for passage of real, comprehensive campaign finance reform like that passed recently by the House. The people of this country want reform, and the Senate cannot stand in their way forever.

Statement on the Vote in Indonesia To Accept the East Timor Referendum Results

October 19, 1999

I welcome the historic decision by the People's Consultative Assembly of Indonesia to accept the results of the August 30 referendum in East Timor. The assembly's unequivocal action shows respect for the will of the people of East Timor. It is also an important step forward in Indonesia's own democratic transformation, which the United States strongly supports.

Of course, much work remains to make sure that East Timor's transition succeeds. In the wake of the assembly's decision, the

United Nations must establish a transition administration leading to East Timor's full independence. And Indonesia must take the necessary steps to ensure the safe return of all displaced East Timorese, including allowing the international community full access to displaced persons in west Timor.

The United States is committed to helping the people of East Timor not only obtain the legal recognition of independence but also develop the institutions they need to thrive as an independent state. We are equally determined to help Indonesia achieve its goal of lasting democracy and prosperity. Today's action will bring both goals closer to fruition.

Statement on House Action on the "Work Incentives Improvement Act"

October 19, 1999

I am extremely pleased that the House, by an overwhelming bipartisan vote today, passed legislation that will remove barriers to work for Americans with disabilities. Today's impressive vote for the "Work Incentives Improvement Act" sends a strong signal that all Americans, including people with disabilities, should have the opportunity to work. Now I call on Congress to finish the job so more Americans can start to work.

My administration has helped create more than 19 million new jobs in the last 6½ years, and unemployment is at a 29-year low. Yet almost three out of four Americans with severe disabilities who want to work are not working. Since taking office, I have made empowering and promoting the independence of people with disabilities a priority. Central to this effort is taking down barriers to work for people with disabilities. One of the biggest barriers these Americans face is the fear of losing their health insurance when they get a job. Under current law, many people with disabilities cannot work and keep their Medicaid or Medicare coverage, creating a tremendous disincentive to work.

The "Work Incentives Improvement Act" would help ensure that people with disabilities do not lose their health care when they gain a job. It would give workers with disabilities the option to buy into Medicaid and would extend Medicare coverage for people

with disabilities who return to work. The "Work Incentives Improvement Act" also modernizes the vocational rehabilitation system by creating a "ticket" that enables an SSI or SSDI beneficiary to go to either a public or private provider of vocational rehabilitation.

In my State of the Union Address, 9 months ago, I urged the Congress to make this historic legislation a top priority, and I fully funded it in the budget I sent to Congress. Like the House, the Senate has overwhelmingly passed the "Work Incentives Improvement Act," thanks to the leadership of Senators Jeffords, Kennedy, Roth, and Moynihan. The bill that passed today has flaws. These include limitations on the health options and inadequate and problematic financing provisions, particularly one affecting student loans. I urge the Congress to address these issues this year and send me this legislation. Americans with disabilities who want to work should not have to wait any longer for that opportunity.

Notice—Continuation of Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia

October 19, 1999

On October 21, 1995, by Executive Order 12978, I declared a national emergency to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States constituted by the actions of significant foreign narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia, and the unparalleled violence, corruption, and harm that they cause in the United States and abroad. The order blocks all property and interests in property of foreign persons listed in an Annex to the order, as well as foreign persons determined to play a significant role in international narcotics trafficking centered in Colombia, to materially assist in, or provide financial or technological support for or goods or services in support of, the narcotics trafficking activities of persons designated in or pursuant to the order, or to be owned or controlled by, or to act for or on behalf of, persons designated in or pursuant to the order. The order also prohibits any

transaction or dealing by United States persons or within the United States in such property or interests in property. Because the activities of significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia continue to threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States and to cause unparalleled violence, corruption, and harm in the United States and abroad, the national emergency declared on October 21, 1995, and the measures adopted pursuant thereto to respond to that emergency, must continue in effect beyond October 21, 1999. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency for 1 year with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 19, 1999.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 12:16 p.m., October 19, 1999]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on October 20.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia

October 19, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the

emergency declared with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia is to continue in effect for 1 year beyond October 21, 1999.

The circumstances that led to the declaration on October 21, 1995, of a national emergency have not been resolved. The actions of significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States and to cause unparalleled violence, corruption, and harm in the United States and abroad. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force the broad authorities necessary to maintain economic pressure on significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia by blocking their property subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and by depriving them of access to the United States market and financial system.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 19, 1999.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Medicare Reform

October 19, 1999

*Dear Mr. Chairman: (Dear Senator
Moynihan:)*

It was a pleasure to meet with you and Senator Moynihan earlier this month to discuss our mutual commitment to strengthening and modernizing Medicare. It continues to be my hope that the Congress will take action this year to, at minimum, make a downpayment on needed reforms of the program. I look forward to working with you toward that end.

In 1997, the Medicare trustees projected that Medicare would become insolvent in 2001. Working together across party lines, the Congress passed and I enacted important reforms that contributed towards extending the life of the Medicare trust fund to 2015. As with any major legislation, the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) included some policies that are flawed or have had unintended consequences that are posing immediate problems to some providers and beneficiaries. In

addition, the program faces the long-term demographic and health care challenges that will inevitably result as the baby-boom generation ages into Medicare. As we worked together in 1997 to address the immediate threat to Medicare, we must work together now to address its short-term and long-term challenges.

Preparing and strengthening Medicare for the next century is and will continue to be a top priority for my Administration. For this reason, I proposed a plan that makes the program more competitive and efficient, modernizes its benefits to include the provision of a long-overdue prescription drug benefit, and dedicates a portion of the surplus to help secure program solvency for at least another 10 years. However, I also share your belief that we need to take prompt action—whether in the context of broader or more limited reforms—to moderate the excessive provider payment reductions in the BBA of 1997. I believe that legislative modifications in this regard should be paid for and should not undermine the solvency of the Medicare trust fund.

You have requested a summary of the administrative actions that I plan to take to moderate the impact of the BBA. In the letter that you sent to me last Thursday, you also asked about four specific issues related to payment for hospital outpatient departments, managed care, skilled nursing facilities, and disproportionate share hospitals.

Attached is a summary of the over 25 administrative actions that my Administration is currently implementing or will take to address Medicare provider payment issues. The Department of Health and Human Services is taking virtually all the administrative actions possible under the law that have a policy justification, which will accrue to the benefit of hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, and other providers.

We are finishing our review of our administrative authority to address the 5.7 percent reduction in hospital outpatient department payments. We believe that the Congressional intent was to not impose an additional reduction in aggregate payments for hospitals and I favor a policy that achieves this goal. The

enactment of clarifying language on this subject would be useful in making clear Congressional intent with regard to this issue. I have attached a letter from Office of Management and Budget Director Jack Lew, which was sent at the request of Congressman Bill Thomas, detailing how such language would be scored by OMB.

With regards to managed care, we share your commitment to expanding choice and achieving stability in the Medicare+Choice marketplace. The BBA required that payments to managed care plans be risk adjusted. To ease the transition to this system, we proposed a 5-year, gradual phase-in of the risk adjustment system. This phase-in forgoes approximately \$4.5 billion in payment reductions that would have occurred if risk adjustment were fully implemented immediately. The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission and other experts support my Administration's risk adjustment plan. Consistent with this position, most policy experts believe that a further slowdown of its implementation is unwarranted. However, we remain committed to making any and all changes that improve its methodology. Moreover, as you know, any administrative and legislative changes that increase payment rates to providers in the fee-for-service program will also increase payments to managed care plans.

On the issue of skilled nursing facilities, we agree that nursing home payments for the sickest Medicare beneficiaries are not adequate. I intend to take all actions possible to address this. Administratively, we can and will use the results of a study that is about to be completed to adjust payments as soon as possible. While we believe that these adjustments must be budget neutral, we are continuing to review whether we have additional administrative authority in this area.

Finally, it appears that there has been confusion about the current policy for disproportionate share hospital (DSH) payments. Hospitals across a considerable number of states have misconstrued how to calculate DSH payments. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has since concluded that this resulted from unclear guidance. Thus, as reported last Friday, HHS will not

recoup pass overpayments and will issue new, clearer guidance as soon as possible.

We believe that our administrative actions can complement legislative modifications to refine BBA payment policies. These legislative modifications should be targeted to address unintended consequences of the BBA that can expect to adversely affect beneficiary access to quality care. I hope and expect that our work together will lay the foundation for much broader and needed reforms to address the demographic and health care challenges confronting the program. We look forward to working with you, as well as the House Ways and Means and Commerce Committees, as we jointly strive to moderate the impact of BBA on the nation's health care provider community.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to William V. Roth, Jr., chairman, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, ranking member, Senate Committee on Finance.

**Remarks on Signing the
Departments of Veterans Affairs and
Housing and Urban Development,
and Independent Agencies
Appropriations Act, 2000, and an
Exchange With Reporters**

October 20, 1999

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, let me, first of all, welcome you all here for the signing of the VA/HUD bill, and say what I would like to do. I want to make a statement, sign the bill, pass out the pens, and then if you have questions, I'll answer the questions then. Okay?

Q. It's a deal.

The President. We've got a deal? [*Laughter*] That way we won't all have to claw each other to death before we finish this.

I would like to welcome Senator Edwards and Congressman Walsh and Congressman Mollohan, Secretary Cuomo, Secretary West, NSF Director Colwell, NASA Director Dan Goldin, and FEMA Director James Lee Witt, as well as the representatives of all these groups who are here who worked so hard

with us to fashion what I think is a truly remarkable and positive piece of legislation.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to our OMB Director, Jack Lew, to Sylvia Mathews, and his whole staff, for the wonderful work that they did on this in working with the Congress, and all the people here represented.

For over 200 years, Presidents have been called upon to approve or not approve spending bills passed by the Congress. Because these bills can profoundly affect the future of our Nation, Presidents must carefully weigh their decisions about signing them. In the 6½ years I have been President, I have put my signature on spending bills only when convinced they reflect the values of our people, respected the need for Government to live within its means, and looked toward the future. The VA/HUD bill I'm about to sign clearly meets these standards. It not only maintains the fiscal discipline that has led us to this moment of prosperity; it also honors our highest values.

We value fairness and work; this bill reflects that by strengthening fair housing enforcement and by providing housing vouchers to help 60,000 more hard-working, low income families move closer to where their jobs are. I want to thank Secretary Cuomo, especially, for his initiative on this. The bill also provides significant increases in housing for elderly Americans and puts in place a plan to ensure that they will continue to have safe and affordable places to live.

We value opportunity. This bill expands opportunity to those who have not felt the full benefits of our prosperity yet. It maintains our commitments to empowerment zones and enterprise communities, while adding part of my new markets initiative, to give investors the same incentives to invest in our inner cities and poor rural areas they currently get to invest in new markets overseas. And the Vice President and I have worked very hard on this for many years, and I thank the Congress. I think the idea of bringing free enterprise and empowering poor communities is something that is becoming a bipartisan consensus in our country. I hope it is. We know that the Government can never provide enough economic opportunity in these areas. And we know if

we can't bring private sector enterprise to these areas now, when our economy is so strong, we'll never get around to doing it. So I thank the Congress for putting these provisions in.

We value clean air and clean water. This bill provides the Environmental Protection Agency with the resources it needs to protect our air and water.

We value our fighting men and women, and thanks to the leadership of the Vice President and the commitment of this Congress, this bill adds the extra resources necessary to improve our veterans' health care.

We value strong communities. This bill will help young people continue to serve their communities through AmeriCorps. And later today, we'll celebrate our fifth anniversary, and I'll have more to say about that.

The bill also provides critical funding for FEMA, to help communities cope with hurricanes and other unforeseen natural disasters—especially now, the disasters caused by Hurricane Floyd. Senator Edwards is here, and I want to thank him for his work on that.

Last night I asked the congressional leaders when we met to look at doing more to pay for the agricultural disasters caused, particularly in this part of our country, by the hurricanes coming on top of the drought.

This bill also looks to the future. It gives NASA the resources it needs to probe the mysteries of space and provides the National Science Foundation with the extra resources it needs to fund research on the frontiers of information technology. This is a little noticed, I think, but profoundly important part of this bill, which I predict will have a big impact on our future for years and years to come.

The legislation is important not just for what it will achieve but for how it was achieved. I'm pleased that our administration and the Congress were able to work together successfully on this bill in a genuine spirit of bipartisan cooperation to resolve our respective differences. Together, we produced legislation that is fully paid for and effectively addresses the critical needs of the American people.

We're especially pleased we were able to achieve acceptable funding levels in a number of areas by providing offsets that were

agreed to by both sides. There is no debate on this bill that there is any Social Security surplus money involved at all.

Now, as all of you know, I met last night with congressional leaders of both parties. We agreed to work together in that same spirit to resolve our remaining differences and make the tough choices necessary to reach an overall agreement on our other outstanding values and budget priorities.

First and foremost, we must protect Social Security and strengthen Medicare. I regret that the leaders of the Republican Party have said they won't take up the Medicare reform and the prescription drug benefit this year. I did ask them to consider my proposal, which would lengthen the life of the Social Security Trust Fund to 2050 and take it out beyond the life expectancy of the baby boomers, without a tax increase or without any benefit cuts. And I hope they will do that.

I believe the priorities that we have must also include making the largest and most diverse group of students in our schools ever, the smartest and best educated students ever, by giving them a world-class, 21st century education. That includes reducing class size by hiring 100,000 more teachers, building or modernizing 6,000 schools, connecting every classroom to the Internet, investing in after-school programs to keep our children safe, and demanding accountability, so that we can turn around failing schools.

We must also work together to keep the crime rate going down. I say again, I'm glad we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years and the lowest murder rate in 32 years. No American believes our country is safe enough. We should set a goal of making this the safest big country in the world. That means doing more of what we know works, including putting 50,000 more community police into our toughest neighborhoods.

It also means, achieving this agreement, that we will have to put aside our differences and honor our commitment to our environment and our national security.

Again I say, in spite of all the conflicts of the last few weeks, we still have a great opportunity to make this a season of progress and work together to pass a budget that lives within its means and lives up to our values.

We've done it before, and we can do it again. We will be stronger in the new century because of what we have achieved here today, and I hope it is just the beginning.

Again, let me thank all of you for your role in this and especially the Members of the Congress who are here.

[At this point, the President began to sign the bill.]

The President. Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], how many pens did President Johnson use when he signed the Voting Rights Act?

Ms. Thomas. Fifty. *[Laughter]* He gave one to the press, too. *[Laughter]*

The President. When all else fails, I can always spell my middle name. *[Laughter]*

[The President finished signing the bill.]

The President. I'll answer the questions and then pass out the pens. How's that?

Meeting With Congressional Leaders

Q. Mr. President, after the meeting last night, why did both sides come out with such conflicting views on taxes, Social Security, tobacco—

The President. I'll tell you exactly what I said about the tobacco issue and what we said about spending. Now, first of all, there's a big controversy, as you know, about whether the Congress has already spent into the Social Security surplus. I don't think we can fully evaluate all that until we see all these bills, and we have a comprehensive resolution. This bill had its own pay-fors. There's no question that this bill does not get into the Social Security surplus.

So what I said to them is—I said the following things: Number one, let's try to have a comprehensive solution. Let's look at all these bills together, see where we are and where we need to go. Number two, there were some things that I felt very strongly that we ought to fund that weren't presently in the bills. I wanted to make sure that we continued to work on the 100,000 teachers, that we continued to work on the police, that we paid our commitments to the Middle East peace process, to reducing the nuclear arsenal in Russia, to our part of our efforts to alleviate the debt of the poorest countries—

that's a big part of the world's millennium project—to the U.N. dues. I'm trying to work that out. But that if I ask for extra money, over and above what they had appropriated, I would make a commitment that we would pay for it, we would find a way to cover that, so there would be no question that any extra funds we asked for—which, in the context of the overall budget, would be quite modest now; there's not that much difference in the dollars—that that would be paid for and that we ought to get all this together and look.

Now, with regard to the tobacco tax, what I said was, I was well aware that they were not going to raise the tobacco tax 55 cents, as I had originally proposed. I still believe that it would be good health policy to have a more modest increase or at least a look-back provision to protect kids from smoking. We're seeing all over the country an absence of those kinds of efforts. Even in the States that have gotten a lot of money, some States are doing it, some States aren't. So I think it would be good policy.

So all I said was that I realized they weren't going to accept my proposal, but that we were now talking about much more modest money that I thought we could find a way to pay for that they could live with.

2000 Election and Campaign Finance Reform

Q. Mr. President, Elizabeth Dole pulled out of the Presidential race today. And also, as you know, for I guess the fourth year in a row, Senate Republicans have defeated the campaign finance efforts. So I wondered whether—first, what you think of that, the fact that they've put that aside again, and also, whether Mrs. Dole's pulling out is another example, in your opinion, of why these efforts are necessary?

The President. Well, first of all, let me say about Mrs. Dole, I think she's a very, very, impressive person. She's had a lot of important public service in her career, and she was clearly qualified to seek the Presidency. And I regret the fact that finances alone kept her from going through the first few primaries and getting to the stage when all those candidates have debates and the voters can actually see them all in ways other than they see them in their ads. And I think

that's too bad, because I think she has a kind of experience that's different from that of any other person running, her work in the Cabinet and in the Red Cross. And I think it's a loss to the Republican Party and a loss to the country that she couldn't go forward.

Secondly, I think that part of what you see is that fact that Governor Bush is the first candidate in the history of the modern era when we've had Federal financing who has given it up so that an unlimited amount of money could be raised; so that puts all the others at, I think, a relative disadvantage. It's something that some people urged on me 4 years ago, because I could have done that, and I decided it wasn't fair, and I didn't do it. I didn't think it was the right thing to do.

And finally, obviously it does make the point, as Senator McCain pointed out earlier, that we do need campaign finance reform, that it's not just the Presidential campaigns. It's also the Senate races. It's also the Congress races. And I can only say, I'm very proud of the members of my party. There were some, I think when I got here in '93, some of our folks felt ambivalent about it, and we worked and worked and worked until we've now got, I think, 100 percent of our party in both Houses voted for both those bills.

You know, the truth is, this is now a matter that's in the hands of the American people. If they decide it's important enough that it will become a voting issue for them, we can change the direction of the country. If they continue to say they care about it but it doesn't influence their votes, then we won't—because it's a democracy, and they're in the driver's seat.

But obviously, I think we ought to pass something like the McCain-Feingold bill. I would even go further. I think—my whole view of this is that the biggest problem is the cost of communications. So if you want—and that's not a criticism of the people who charge us money to run our ads, either, because they can get even more money, as you know. In the election season, they can get even more money for commercial clients. But it costs a lot money. So you're either

going to have to have free or reduced television time, radio time, access to the newspapers, or some guaranteed source of funding, because no matter how you change the rules, until people can have more or less comparable access to have their views heard, it's going to be a difficult thing.

But I think we should keep working on it. I hope that Senator McCain and Senator Feingold aren't too discouraged. I hope they'll be willing to come back next year. And we'll keep working.

But the plain fact is that the American people need to say not only that they care about it but that they care enough about it for it to influence how they vote. And if they do, we'll make some progress.

Defense Appropriations Legislation

Q. Mr. President, are you going to sign or veto the defense bill?

The President. Well, let me tell you what I said yesterday to the leaders. That's not a decision that I have to make until early next week. And what I said to them I will say again to you. All these other bills raise questions already about how they're financed and whether they're properly financed. And then there are these outstanding questions I mentioned. I think the teachers—keeping the commitment that a bipartisan majority of Congress made just a year ago, in 1998, to the smaller classes and the 100,000 teachers; continuing to do the things we know will bring the crime rate down with the police; doing right by the environment—these things are important.

So what I said we needed to do is to look at all the bills that are outstanding so that we can evaluate exactly where we are and try our best to reach agreement by next Tuesday. And I promised that our people would work hard with the congressional leadership, the appropriators, and all the relevant committees and subcommittees, and that if we had to, we'd be prepared to work around the clock between now and next Tuesday to get the job done.

So I think that's how I would like to leave it now. I think it's important not to give the impression that this whole issue is just about one bill, because it's not. You can't just take one bill out of the reality of the aggregate

budget. We got the deficit down and eliminated it and then got to a surplus by looking at the big picture, and that's how we ought to deal with this.

Indonesian Elections

Q. Can you comment on the Indonesian elections and the outcome of that election's impact on the situation in East Timor?

The President. Well, first of all, they accepted the results of the referendum, which is good, because the Government offered the East Timorese the chance to vote, and they took it, and they voted—over 78 percent, I think—for independence. So the first thing that has happened is they accepted the results of the referendum.

The second thing that has happened is they have selected a new leader consistent with the constitution of Indonesia. And I think that has to be a very hopeful development for the world.

So I feel pretty good about where we are today. Now, there are still a lot of problems in East Timor. There are still a lot of hurdles for Indonesia out there. They've been through an incredibly traumatic time, not just politically but economically, and a lot of people have been hurt very badly economically. But I think the events of the last 2 days should give us all hope that a very great country that the world needs very much is on the way back, and that's what I'm hoping is happening.

Federal Budget

Q. Mr. President, you said on the budget that the amounts were quite modest now. How much? How much money are we talking about?

The President. I don't know. I've asked our people to go back and look at it. But we're not talking about a great deal of money, so that if we're just talking about that amount of money, I think we could reach agreement with the Republican and the Democratic leaders about ways to pay for it.

We're also talking about the substance, though, of some of the bills. I feel very strongly about not just the amount of money in education, but how is the money going to be spent. We shouldn't back off of the

commitment we made to the American people and to the children of this country just a year ago, that both Republicans and Democrats were bragging on in the election a year ago—we shouldn't just turn around and drop it. I think that's a big mistake, and I'll fight for that.

I think that we need to continue to push raising standards, testing kids, ending social promotion, but not blaming them for the failure of the system, which means you've got to have more after-school programs; you've got to have more summer school programs, and there ought to be a system which provides help to turn around failing schools, because we know that's working. In the States where that's going on, that's really working. Where these schools are being targeted and being told you're going to have to shut down if you don't turn around, it's working. But those aren't money problems. And then I have several environmental concerns that I hope we can work out, that I personally believe are quite important to our country's future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:47 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. George W. Bush of Texas. H.R. 2684, approved October 20, was assigned Public Law No. 106-74. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

**Statement on Signing the
Departments of Veterans Affairs and
Housing and Urban Development,
and Independent Agencies
Appropriations Act, 2000**

October 20, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2684, the "Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000."

This Act will fund vital housing, community development, environmental, disaster assistance, veterans, space, and science programs. Specifically, it provides funding for the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Environmental Protection Agen-

cy (EPA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and several other agencies.

The Act funds a number of my Administration's high priorities, including the Corporation for National and Community Service at this year's current funding level. National Service gives young people the opportunity to obtain funding for a college education while serving the country in areas of great need, such as the environment, public safety, and human services. National Service also allows young people to participate in service-learning programs that provide substantial academic and social benefits, including the opportunity to learn responsible citizenship.

I am pleased that the Act also provides full funding of HUD's highest priority: \$10.9 billion for the renewal of all Section 8 contracts, assuring continuation of HUD rental subsidies for low-income tenants in privately owned housing. I am also pleased that the Act provides 60,000 housing vouchers for low-income families. In addition, the Act adequately funds programs to help distressed communities, including my new initiative for America's Private Investment Companies (APIC), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), assistance to the homeless, the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund, Brownfields redevelopment, and rural and urban empowerment zones. The CDBG program promotes housing and economic activity in low- and moderate-income areas. It provides funding for housing rehabilitation, construction, and homebuyer assistance. The CDFI Fund helps to create a network of community development banks across the country, spurring the flow of capital to distressed neighborhoods and their currently underserved low-income residents.

The Act includes funding that could support part of my New Markets proposal, which will help ensure that all Americans share in our economic prosperity. APIC and the rural and urban empowerment zones will help revitalize communities so that they can take advantage of the strength of the economy and help those left behind in our economic boom. Additionally, \$1.02 billion is provided for

homeless assistance grants, enabling localities to continue to shape and implement comprehensive, flexible, coordinated “continuum of care” approaches to solving homelessness.

I am pleased that the Act adequately funds Fair Housing programs, which will enable HUD to expand significantly its activities aimed at reducing the level of housing discrimination nationwide.

The Act provides \$710 million, a significant increase, for elderly housing, recognizing the dramatic rise in our elderly population and the changing housing needs that accompany this unprecedented demographic shift. The Act replaces old models, which separated housing from services, with new models that bring services to elders where they live—allowing seniors to remain in their homes and communities longer.

I am also pleased that H.R. 2684 provides \$19.8 billion for the medical care of our Nation’s veterans. Since January, long waiting times in VA medical centers have disrupted the level and quality of medical care that veterans have received. This level of service is unacceptable, and the funding levels in the Act will allow us to address this issue. The Act will also allow for the provision of a range of home- and community-based care for those high-priority veterans who do not have access to such services, and it provides resources for the aggressive testing and treatment of Hepatitis C.

The Act provides \$7.6 billion for the EPA, which will enable the agency to adequately implement our environmental laws. I am pleased that H.R. 2684 adequately funds EPA’s portion of the Clean Water Action Plan and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. However, the Act should have provided full funding for the Climate Change Technology Initiative and the new Clean Air Partnership Fund at the requested levels. Furthermore, I continue to believe that the provision prohibiting implementation of the Kyoto Protocol is unnecessary, as my Administration has no intent of implementing the Protocol prior to ratification. This year’s language is identical to last year’s provision. Since this year’s House and Senate report language is contradictory, we will implement the Kyoto provision consistent with the lan-

guage in last year’s conference report. I also am disturbed that the conference report includes new language that is aimed at restricting efforts to reduce smog by delaying EPA action on several States’ clean air petitions. My Administration has a strong commitment to clean air and will continue to use the full range of authorities under the law to make our Nation’s air safe to breathe for all Americans.

The Act also adequately funds the Nation’s investment in space and science programs. It provides \$13.65 billion for NASA and \$3.9 billion for the NSF, including \$126 million for my Administration’s Information Technology in the 21st Century Initiative. If we want to maintain our current economic prosperity, it is essential that we sustain our investment in long-term research across all the scientific and engineering disciplines. This Act maintains the Nation’s investments in science, technology, and learning, which have fueled unprecedented economic growth for the past decade.

Finally, I am pleased that H.R. 2684 adequately funds FEMA to help cope with unforeseen disasters. The \$2.5 billion in contingent emergency funds, along with the \$821 million appropriated, ensures that the country is well prepared to deal with unforeseen natural disasters and that FEMA has adequate resources to respond to Hurricane Floyd and other disasters.

I am pleased that my Administration and the Congress were able to work together successfully on this bill—in a spirit of cooperation—to resolve our respective differences and produce a bill that is fully paid for and effectively addresses critical needs of the American people. I am especially pleased that we were able to achieve acceptable funding levels in a number of areas by providing offsets that were agreed on by both sides. I urge the Congress to work with my Administration in similar fashion in coming to mutually acceptable agreements on the remaining FY 2000 appropriations bills and to do so expeditiously. The American people deserve no less.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 20, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2684, approved October 20, was assigned Public Law No. 106–74.

**Remarks on the Fifth Anniversary
of AmeriCorps**
October 20, 1999

The President. Well, Andre, thanks to you no one has to wonder about what AmeriCorps is all about. I thank you for your introduction. I thank you for your service to AmeriCorps and to your country. And I thank you for the power of your example. And I hope, maybe more than anyone else who speaks today, your voice and your story will be told out of this great anniversary meeting.

I want to thank all the other people here who helped to make this day possible. I want to thank Deb Jospin for her leadership; Senator Harris Wofford; Eli Segal, for what he did to help us get started; and all of them. Let's give them all a hand. *[Applause]*

I want to thank Hillary for always believing in this and for taking it on as a personal goal that we would do something about the fact that when we had 100,000 people in AmeriCorps and everybody who knew about it loved it but most people didn't know about it, she decided she would change that. And Eli and Alan Solomont and our friend Dan Dutko and others agreed to help. And I thank her for her passionate support during these years when we believed in AmeriCorps when it was just sort of an idea. And she has done a wonderful job. *[Applause]* Thank you.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here, who were here, Senator Spector, Congressman Quinn, and Congressman Payne, three who represent the bipartisan support that we have enjoyed. I thank James Lee Witt, Jack Lew, Janice Lachance, and others in the administration who have helped us. I want to thank our presenters, whom I will introduce in just a moment—General Colin Powell, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, Sargent Shriver, and the Governor of Utah, Mike Leavitt—for being here. And I want to thank the Howard University Choir. They're going to sing for us and with us in a few moments.

You know, it seems impossible to me that it was 5 years ago on the North Lawn of the White House that we led the first class of

AmeriCorps members in the AmeriCorps pledge. It wasn't very long before that that I had the privilege of signing the legislation creating AmeriCorps with the same pen that President Kennedy had used to sign the legislation creating the Peace Corps.

I always believed that you would elevate the cause of citizen service in America, that you would make America a better place. But on that day 5 years ago, AmeriCorps was still just an idea with a good plan, built on the remarkable pathbreaking efforts of Sargent Shriver with the Peace Corps and VISTA; built on the remarkable service corps I had seen in Boston and Los Angeles and San Antonio and other cities; championed by some of the most thoughtful and passionate citizens of both parties; energized by—even then—20,000 young people who were raring to give something to their country and wanted to be part of AmeriCorps.

But still, it was just an incandescent idea. Today we celebrate, thanks to you and your predecessors, a glowing success. AmeriCorps members are living up to the highest obligations of our citizenship. They are creating opportunity for others, taking responsibility for themselves, and fostering a community of all Americans. They are our best builders, building that bridge to the new century.

You can see it in the way their optimism inspires others to also lend a hand and volunteer in their communities. You can see it in the remarkable teamwork and camaraderie that I have personally witnessed and felt all over this country in so many different activities. You can see it in the way they work together across the lines that would normally divide AmeriCorps members, and eliminate the alienation that too many of our young people experience today.

You can see kids who went to Ivy League schools and kids who dropped out of high school working side by side, serving together, giving together, and treating each other as equals, proving that Dr. King's dream of a beloved community is alive and well in the hearts and lives of the AmeriCorps volunteers.

I could just give you one illustration among thousands. On his very first day as an AmeriCorps member in a small town in southern West Virginia, Scott Finn heard

that local residents had a dream of cleaning up a boarded-up old schoolhouse and turning it into a community center. The school had no electricity; it had no running water. It was a complete wreck, inside and out, an eyesore, and a place that invited drugs and crime and mischief.

So Scott, fresh out of Harvard, a long way from a little town in West Virginia, put together a team of volunteers and sparked a new determination to get things done. They hauled water out of a nearby creek to mop the floors. They negotiated a lease. They raised \$50,000 in grant money. And today that sorry old school is a beautiful new community center, with a lending library, a gym, and a safe playground. That's AmeriCorps at its best. That new community center is a meeting place for dances, for gospel concerts, for after-school programs, and a Boy Scout troop. It's a tremendous source of community pride. Scott is one of the 21 remarkable AmeriCorps members and alumni who will receive one of our All-AmeriCorps Awards. They'll all be introduced later. But I just wanted you to think about that.

When AmeriCorps members like Scott first took their pledge, they promised, and I quote, "to carry this commitment with me, this year and beyond." Today we will help them fulfill the second part of that pledge, for today I'm asking the Corporation for National Service to develop a new initiative to connect former AmeriCorps members with service opportunities wherever they live. Habitat for Humanity, the Red Cross, the Boys and Girls Clubs, America's Promise, the Points of Light Foundation, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, the United Way, the National Mentoring Partnership: they've all signed on to help, all to use the incredible experience and commitment of our former AmeriCorps members.

Like returned Peace Corps volunteers and military veterans, those of you who are AmeriCorps members and alums represent an enormous national pool of know-how and can-do. You are already 150,000 strong and growing stronger. I hope soon we'll be adding 100,000 new members to your ranks every single year.

There is no question that you are now an indispensable force for change in America.

After years of fights over funding and purpose in AmeriCorps, peace is breaking out all over in Washington. [*Laughter*] A major factor lifting AmeriCorps out of the realm of partisan politics here is the support of people and leaders and especially Governors of both parties, like Governor Leavitt, out in the country who have seen firsthand how AmeriCorps members are setting off chain reactions of civic involvement, civic progress, and civic pride.

In State after State, in community after community, AmeriCorps volunteers prove daily they're one of the best and smartest investments our country ever made. They're showing us here in Washington what you can do when you stop talking past one another and start working with each other. Right now, in the middle of this battle over the budget, we need more reminders like this.

Today I had the honor of signing the budget for VA and HUD, for the EPA, for the National Science Foundation, programs to help the homeless, give housing vouchers to empower the poor; programs for our empowerment zones that the Vice President has led; and for the first step in my new markets initiative, to give investors in this country the same incentives to invest in poor communities in America, where many of you work, that we give them today to invest in poor communities in Latin America and Asia and Africa. This is important.

I hope this is just the beginning and that we will do the same when it comes to the education of our children. AmeriCorps volunteers have been in the forefront of a lot of our education efforts, and I hope that the spirit you bring will infect the spirit of our deliberations here. We know that our children can have a good future if we work together across party lines the way you do.

Let me just say, before I introduce the distinguished Americans who will present the All-AmeriCorps Awards, once again how profoundly grateful I am to every person here who has helped to lift AmeriCorps beyond the pale of a partisan political fight. I especially thank those who had genuine reservations 5 years ago and then have the follow-through and the courage and the openness

to take an honest look at AmeriCorps in action and to help us to improve some of our actions, which we also did.

Most of all, I want to express my gratitude to the AmeriCorps members and their leaders throughout this country who have lived up to their pledge and so much more. By taking your responsibility personally, as the advertising campaign says, you are breathing new life into our old, old democracy, sparking a new patriotism among a new generation of Americans—a patriotism of the homefront rooted in the knowledge that our Nation's strength and security and our individual possibilities are all determined in no small measure by whether all of us have a chance to live up to our God-given potential. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

I'm going to introduce our four presenters and they, in turn, will come to the microphone and do their jobs.

From the moment her husband was struck down on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, Coretta Scott King determined that it was up to her to keep the dream alive. Despite her grief, she got on a plane for Memphis to address the same striking sanitation workers her husband had gone there to help. She told them, "We are going to continue this work to make all people truly free."

She has done that in every possible way: by leading marches and giving impassioned speeches for racial justice, human rights, an end to discrimination based on sexual orientation; by founding the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change; by leading the efforts to create a national holiday in her husband's memory; and by helping to turn that holiday into a day of service, not a day of rest. There is no one in America who is better suited to present the All-AmeriCorps Common Ground Award, and we welcome her today.

Sargent Shriver often describes himself as a lucky man, having been graced with the remarkable and wonderful family he has. I might say, the rest of us think he's lucky because, among other things, he's the youngest and healthiest man his age on the face of the planet. *[Laughter]*

But our luck is just as profound, for America has never in its long history had a more compassionate and passionate man more de-

voted to public service. He was the founder of the Peace Corps and the VISTA. He served the Navy in World War II, created Head Start and the Job Corps and Legal Services. He led the Special Olympics, served as Ambassador to France, led the Chicago Board of Education; fostered civil rights early, when it wasn't so popular; and economic opportunity for the poor, all growing out of his profound religious faith and his deep patriotism. On top of all that, he is one of the most warm and genuinely unassuming people you will ever meet. We are honored to have him here today to present the All-AmeriCorps Award for Strengthening Communities. One of the greatest public servants in the history of the United States, Sargent Shriver.

Whenever I speak about Mike Leavitt, the Governor of Utah and the new chairman of the National Governors' Association—one of the most popular leaders in Utah history—I am reluctant to say anything nice about him because his State is so Republican, I'm afraid I'll hurt him and knock him down a peg or two back home if it gets out that I'm bragging on him. *[Laughter]* But his complete commitment to service and his generous support of AmeriCorps is one of the reasons that we are where we are today, with the breadth and depth of support for this program.

Two years ago, in a rally with General Powell, Governor Leavitt helped to launch Utah's Promise, a statewide effort to mobilize all the citizens of that State to action. Already it is yielding remarkable results, increasing literacy, creating new service teams, recruiting and training more caring foster parents, a big issue for Hillary and for me. Governor Leavitt has been a great champion of Utah's schoolchildren, reducing class size, increasing teacher pay, equipping Utah's classrooms for the 21st century. It is only fitting that he present the All-AmeriCorps Award for Leadership, because he is truly an All-American leader. Thank you, Governor Leavitt.

And finally, General Colin Powell. In 1993 General Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the architect of America's victory in Desert Storm, retired from his extraordinary military career. I was one of many Presidents who benefited immensely by his service.

But that was just the first act in Colin Powell's remarkable life of service. He has gone on to serve our country as the leader of America's Promise, his national crusade to give every child the nurturing and support he or she needs and to give every young person the opportunity to serve. Already General Powell and his troops, including many AmeriCorps members, have touched the lives of millions of children. General Powell used to say in a characteristically modest way that he was, first and foremost, an infantryman. Ladies and gentlemen, I begin by introducing you to the infantryman who is leading the charge toward America's Promise, General Colin Powell.

[At this point, the All-AmeriCorps Awards were presented.]

The President. Now, I think our presenters did a wonderful job. Let's give them all a hand again. [Applause] They were great. We thank them for their time.

I want to leave you with this thought, and then ask the new class to stand and join me in the AmeriCorps promise. And then we will hear from and sing with the Howard University Choir in "America The Beautiful."

When you leave here today and you remember how you felt and you remember the stories of the people we honored, I want you to think of the future you would like to build for America in the 21st century. I want you to think about what you'd like this country and this world to be like when your children are your age, when your grandchildren are your age.

If I ask you to write down what you think the new century will hold, depending on your background, you might say, well, we're going to finally solve all the mysteries of the human gene, which is true, and then mothers will go home from the hospital with their newborn babies with a little map of their future, and it will tell you, individualized, what kind of food your children should eat, what kind of exercise regimes they should have, what they should avoid, how you can maximize the quality of their lives.

Or if you're into computers, you might talk about the next generation of the Internet and how, in no time at all, the number of Internet users will be as dense as the number of tele-

phone users in America and how the Internet might allow children in the poorest villages of the world to skip a whole generation of educational and economic development. Or you might think about how these two things will join together, and we'll be able to put little digital, electronic impulses in various parts of people's bodies that will help them overcome paralysis and have medical miracles.

Or if you're interested in outer space, you might say you look forward to the discovering of billions of new galaxies and finding out what's really in those big black holes in outer space.

Isn't it interesting when you think about all this modern, exciting stuff, the most sweeping discoveries the world has ever known—don't you think it's interesting that the biggest problems we have in this country and throughout this world relate not to some modern problem—although there are modern problems, like sophisticated weapons—but they're rooted in the oldest, most primitive problem of human societies: We're still afraid of people who are different from us, who look different from us, who act different from us, who have different views about how to worship God or live their lives.

That's why AmeriCorps is so important. For all the things I've been involved in all these years as President, all the things I've worked to do, I really believe, looking toward the future, if every young person has a chance to be a good citizen—and we don't give up on anybody; we always give them a chance to come back, here; we had a lot of comeback kids here today talking—and if America can remain committed to building one America across all the lines that divide us, recognizing that our differences make life more exciting, but what's important is our common humanity—if those two things can prevail, more than any modern discovery, you'll be proud of the America your children and grandchildren have.

That's why AmeriCorps matters and why I am so grateful to you. Thank you very much.

Now, I want to ask the newest class of AmeriCorps volunteers to stand up and repeat the oath after me. Raise your right hand.

"I will get things done for America to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier. I will bring Americans together to strengthen our communities. Faced with apathy, I will take action. Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground. Faced with adversity, I will persevere. I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond. I am an AmeriCorps member. And I will get things done."

[Audience members repeated the pledge line by line after the President.]

Congratulations.

Now—good for you. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to ask you, in advance, to give a warm round of applause to the Howard University Choir. They've waited through this whole thing to sing "America The Beautiful" with us. [Applause]

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. in a tent on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Andre Crisp, AmeriCorps volunteer, who introduced the President; Eli Segal, former Chief Executive Officer, Corporation for National Service; Alan Solomont, former national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; and the late Dan Dutko, Democratic Party fundraiser. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Statement on the Election of Abdurrahman Wahid as President of Indonesia

October 20, 1999

I congratulate Abdurrahman Wahid on his election as President of Indonesia. He and the people of Indonesia deserve enormous credit for the democratic process that led to this peaceful change in government. This election, conducted fairly and transparently, has been a true triumph of democracy.

Indonesia still faces many challenges—achieving national reconciliation, consolidating economic recovery, and building institutions accountable to its people. With a democratically elected leadership, I am optimistic that real progress will be made toward all these goals.

I look forward to working closely with the new President and his government.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia

October 20, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia that was declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 20, 1999.

Remarks Honoring the National Association of Police Organizations' "Top Cops"

October 21, 1999

Thank you very much, Tom. Congressman Stupak, Representatives Larson and Udall, thank you for being here. And I want to thank in their absence Senator Biden and Senator Leahy. Senator Biden had to go cast a very important vote in the Congress. He was here earlier.

I also want to thank the executive director of NAPO, Bob Scully, who has been a great friend to this administration and a great fighter for our police initiatives. And I want to introduce formally our new director of the COPS program, Tom Frazier, the former Baltimore Police Commissioner. Thank you, Tom, for your willingness to serve. Please stand up so they can see you.

I also have a note which says we are joined today by Attorney General Nixon of Missouri and Mayor Lafuente of Poughkeepsie, New York, so I welcome them here.

I look forward to this day every year, to honor the people who are standing behind me. They honor us every day just by going to work. And they, I am sure, would be the first to tell you that even though they have done really magnificent things deserving of the honor of America's Top Cops, that they really stand in the shoes of thousands, indeed, tens of thousands of others who do the right thing day in and day out to make America a safer place.

In 1968, in his last campaign, Robert Kennedy said the fight against crime "is a fight to preserve that quality of community which is at the root of our greatness."

Those we honor today are at the forefront of that fight and, therefore, exemplify that greatness. They have performed astonishing acts of valor and humanity, crossing the line of fire to rescue downed officers; being shot and wounded, yet, managing to return fire and subdue an assailant; flying across the Alaska wilderness to singlehandedly capture five armed kidnappers; spotting a dangerous gas leak and evacuating 200 citizens moments before the apartment building exploded.

These and other amazing stories aren't from the TV shows; they actually happened. They represent in dramatic form the kind of professional police work that goes on every day. Just last week, three brave officers were ambushed and killed and two others were wounded by a gunman in Pleasanton, Texas. We mourn their passing and offer our prayers for their families and their fellow officers. Every day, every officer that puts on a badge knows that he or she, too, may be called upon to put life on the line.

As has already been said by the Deputy Attorney General and by Congressman Stupak and by Tom, America today is a safer place as a result. We had years, in times past, when the crime rate would go down a little, and then it would go up a little, but the trendline was always up, with a few welcome downs. But this year, as the Justice Department reported this week—excuse me, for last year—the crime rate fell again in all categories, in all parts of the country. The overall crime rate is now at a 26-year low, the murder rate at a 31-year low.

Crime has been dropping, now, for 7 straight years. This is the longest continuous decline in the crime rate ever recorded in our country. In part, that is because all of us, from the grassroots to Washington, DC, have intensified our support for common-sense strategies to fight crime and to prevent crime.

Seven years ago, many people thought the crime rate would go up forever. I had had the privilege of working for 12 years as Governor and, before that, as attorney general of my State, with law enforcement officers. I had the opportunity in 1991 to travel across America and talk to community policing and community prosecuting efforts that were working, to meet with community leaders that were walking the streets in citizens' patrols and had confidence in the local police because of the relationships they had. And I had seen what now we see sweeping the country: that there was community after community where the crime rate was going down if they were doing the right things and if they were doing the smart things.

And so I worked with the Members of Congress who were here then, and especially with Senator Biden and Senator Leahy, to take what we learned from community leaders and from law enforcement officers and turn it into a crime bill that would put 100,000 police on the street, as I had promised, that would ban assault weapons, something I strongly supported. And in addition to that, we passed the Brady bill, which has now resulted in over 400,000 people being denied the right to purchase a handgun because they've got a problem in their background.

In 1994, we passed the crime bill with the assault weapons ban; we began our COPS program; we toughened penalties; and we expanded programs for smart prevention. Now, there was a lot—believe it or not, there was a lot of controversy about all this back then. We were told that the Brady bill would prevent no criminals from getting guns. We were told these police would never appear on the street, and if they did, it wouldn't make any difference—never mind the fact that by 1993, violent crime had tripled in America over the previous 30 years, while the size of our police forces had increased by only 10

percent. And more and more police officers were being forced off the street into squad cars with their partners because the neighborhoods in which they were working were so much more dangerous.

I want to reiterate to all of you all that the Congress, those that voted with me, and I did. The only thing we did was to take what people, like the people in uniform behind me, were telling us all over America and turn it into law. They said, "If you will give us the tools, the American people will make our streets safer, and we will do our part."

Well, 5 years later, as has already been said, we have already funded over 100,000 police officers, more than we promised, ahead of time and under budget. Five of the 32 officers we honor today, 5 of those behind me, were funded under the COPS program.

Now, in spite of all we come here to celebrate, I doubt if there is a person here or a person in our country who thinks the crime rate is low enough. I just got off the phone talking to a young woman who was being honored on Oprah Winfrey's TV show today because of her courage in that shooting that occurred in a church in Texas a few weeks ago. And she had a young friend with Down syndrome. She pulled the child down, threw herself over the child—the child did not understand what was going on and just wanted to get up. This young girl sustained a wound in her shoulder. So she held the blood in her body with one arm and kept the rest of her body on her friend. This is still a great country with great young people like that.

But before we get too self-congratulatory about the crime rate being at a 26-year low, we need to ask ourselves—in view of the headlines we've had in this country for the last 2 years and in view of the daily experiences of the people we honor today—whether there's a single soul that believes this is a safe enough country.

Now, you know, I'm always trying to get people to aim big. When I said we were going to put 100,000 cops on the street, people rolled their eyes and said it would never happen. When I said we were going to cut the deficit in half in 4 years, people rolled their eyes and said it would never happen. We've now got the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years.

Things do not happen unless you imagine them happening, and then put in place strategies to reach your dreams. I think the time has come for America to say, "Okay, we now know we can get the crime rate down, but we have a new goal. We want the freest big country in the world to be the safest big country in the world, and we're not going to stop until America is the safest big country on the entire face of the Earth."

Now, if we're serious about that—if we're serious about doing something to protect the children, like those who have been victimized in Littleton and all these other school shootings; the children who were shot at that Jewish community center; people like that fine young Filipino postman who was murdered in California; or the people who were shot in the middle of the country, the young Korean Christian coming out of his church, the African-American basketball coach who was murdered; all those people in that church in Texas—if we're serious about that, you all clapped—then you say, "Okay, how are we going to get that done?"

Well, first of all, we have to continue to plug the holes in our strategy of keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and kids. We have to close the gun show loophole in the Brady bill. People shouldn't be able to buy guns at gun shows and flea markets and not have background checks. We ought to ban the importation of these large ammunition clips. We ought to do other things which make the things that are already on the books—the background checks, the assault weapons ban—work. And I'm deeply disappointed that the Congress hasn't acted on it yet.

The second thing we ought to do is to recognize that for all the good work these police have done, we actually need more in the high-crime neighborhoods of America. If you want community policing, there must be the man- and woman-power there to cover the waterfront. And that's why I asked the Congress, I said, "Look, this 100,000 police thing is working. It's inexpensive. We beat the budget. We put the people out there. The cities are using them. The counties are using them. Let's put 50,000 more out over the next 5 years in the highest crime areas, in the toughest areas. And I believe it will work,

particularly if we also provide new community prosecutors, the best crime-fighting technology for the police from better communications systems to crime mapping systems. And I know there is bipartisan support for this.”

Senator Biden has gotten enormous support for his bill to extend the life of the COPS program for another 5 years. If Congress passes it, I’ll sign it. We almost won, as you heard, yesterday in the House of Representatives a vote to fully fund our proposal in the first year. Instead, they funded only half the police officers, no community prosecutors, and far, far less new crime-fighting technology, which is a big issue.

Now, this doesn’t make any sense to me. If you’ve got a problem that you’re solving and you know it’s still too big and you know what to do to make it better and you really believe this ought to be the safest big country in the world and we’ve got the money to do it, why would you choose to spend the money on something else instead of making America the safest big country in the world? If Congress sends me a crime-fighting bill that’s a crime spending bill that doesn’t have the right priorities, I will have to veto it. I want those police on the street. They are making America safer, and I am not satisfied, and you shouldn’t be satisfied until it’s the safest country in the world.

We think there ought to be more police and fewer guns on the street. I do not think a strategy of fewer police and more guns is what the American people want. And so I ask for their support. And again I say, this is not a partisan issue out in America. I am quite sure, standing behind me in uniform, there are police officers who vote for members of both parties. I would be astonished if they were all Democrats—gratified but astonished. *[Laughter]*

This is not a partisan issue. When they wheel you into the emergency room with a gunshot wound in your body, nobody asks you for your party registration before they try to dig the bullet out.

We know what works. We need to listen to the police. We need to listen to NAPO. We need to work together in a bipartisan, even a nonpartisan spirit. This is a national

security issue, just as much as the bill I signed the other day at the Pentagon.

And every time I think about a child who is victimized, every time I have to relive the stories of all these school shootings that we’ve experienced since I’ve been President, I know that I can’t wave a magic wand and make it all go away. I know that no matter what we do, there will still be people who do bad things and people who are seized by demons. But I know one thing: We can make this a lot safer country.

And when I hear people in the Congress say, “Well, we just have to punish people more. We don’t really have to make it harder for them to get guns, even if they’re criminals,” I would point out that we’ve got a higher percentage of people behind bars, serving longer average sentences, than anybody else. If that were the answer, why are the police telling us to take more sensible measures to restrict access to guns?

And if you have this argument, let me give you a statistic that will trump any argument. Forget about deliberate crimes. The death rate from accidental shooting of children in America is 9 times higher than that of the next 25 biggest industrial countries combined—combined.

So don’t let anybody tell you that we don’t need to do more to keep guns away from kids and crooks. We do. And don’t let anybody tell you that we can’t do it without interfering with the constitutional right to hunt, to engage in proper sports shooting and all those things. We’re not talking about that. And don’t let anybody tell you that 50,000 more police on our street, 50,000 more people like those we honor today, wouldn’t make America a safer place, not only by catching criminals but by physically being there and working with community leaders by preventing crime in the first place.

We’ve got all these opportunities on the edge of this new millennium, with the strongest economy in our lifetimes. I don’t think it’s too much to say that we ought to use these opportunities to save Social Security and Medicare, to give our kids a world-class education with 100,000 teachers, and to keep working to make America the safest and the healthiest big country on Earth.

I am proud that all of you are working with us to achieve that goal. And if we keep working, I still think we will get it done.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas J. Scotto, president, National Association of Police Organizations, who introduced the President; Attorney General Jeremiah W. Nixon of Missouri; Mayor Colette Lafuente of Poughkeepsie, NY; and Mary Beth Talley, who protected her friend Heather McDonald during the shooting at Wedgewood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX.

Statement on Signing Legislation Establishing Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

October 21, 1999

I am pleased today to sign into law S. 323, which creates the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park in Colorado as America's 55th national park.

The Black Canyon, carved over eons by the unyielding waters of the Gunnison River, is a true natural treasure. Its nearly vertical walls, rising half a mile high, harbor one of the most spectacular stretches of wild river in America. No other canyon in North America combines the remarkable depth, narrowness, and sheerness of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison.

This bipartisan bill demonstrates once again that preserving our environment for future generations is a cause that transcends party lines. In that spirit, I urge Congress to fully fund my lands legacy initiative this year, and to work with me to secure permanent funding to continue these efforts well into the 21st century. Together, we can ensure that other treasures like the Black Canyon are preserved for all time.

Statement Commemorating the Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin

October 21, 1999

Four years ago today, according to the Hebrew calendar, Yitzhak Rabin was murdered by an assassin in Tel Aviv. He was a Prime Minister, a general, a diplomat, and a coura-

geous soldier in the battle for peace. All of us who were his friends still mourn his death.

Twelve days from now, world leaders will gather in Oslo to honor Yitzhak Rabin's memory. I will attend on behalf of the American people. It was in Oslo, 6 years ago, that Israelis and Palestinians made the crucial decision to try to work together to achieve peace. Now, Prime Minister Barak, Chairman Arafat, and I will come together in Oslo to build on that legacy and move closer to Rabin's goal: a permanent peace between Israel and the Palestinian people.

There is much hard work ahead, with difficult decisions for all sides. But as we look back in sorrow to mourn the passing of a great man, we must do everything in our power on behalf of the cause to which he gave his life.

Statement on House Action on Education Legislation

October 21, 1999

Making our schools work for all America's children is the most important challenge we face. By passing H.R. 2 today, the House took an important step toward improving educational opportunities for the Nation's most disadvantaged students. Although I have a number of concerns with this bill, I am pleased that H.R. 2 reflects a bipartisan consensus on several principles of the education reform plan I sent Congress earlier this year. As I said in my State of the Union Address, the Federal Government has a responsibility not only to invest more in our poorest schools, but to demand more results in return.

In particular, the bill continues the work of standards-based reform, expands public school choice, and recognizes the importance of holding schools accountable for results. I am pleased that a solid bipartisan majority in the House voted to reject the false promise of vouchers. I am also pleased that the House, by passing the Mink amendment, chose to incorporate gender equity provisions in this legislation.

As the reauthorization process continues, I will work with Congress to improve certain aspects of this bill, including provisions for

students with limited English proficiency, as well as provisions that target funds to our neediest students, increase the quality of Title I instructors, and ensure that accountability systems are workable. We have more work to do to enact a strong, comprehensive plan to hold schools accountable for results. I urge Congress to continue moving forward.

Proclamation 7243—National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, 1999

October 21, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Events of the past year have dramatically demonstrated the continuing need for a National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence. In communities across our country, we saw young lives cut short by gunfire. We watched, horrified, as the same scene played out repeatedly in classrooms, school yards, and places of worship. Out of cities like Fort Worth, Texas; Conyers, Georgia; Granada Hills, California; and Littleton, Colorado, came the images that have become painfully familiar—racing ambulances, terrified children, grieving families. As a national community, we shared a sense of devastating loss too immediate to comprehend. Behind these headlines, every day in our Nation 12 young people die as a result of gun violence.

In response to this disturbing cycle, my Administration has taken comprehensive action against youth violence. Last October, we held the first-ever White House Conference on School Safety, where I launched a new initiative to increase the number of safety officers in schools and unveiled a new plan to help schools respond to violence. After the tragedy in Littleton, we held a Summit on Youth Violence at which we launched a national campaign to end youth violence.

Earlier this month, I established the White House Council on Youth Violence to ensure the effective coordination of the many agencies and programs of the Federal Government that address youth violence issues. In addition, we have selected 54 communities

to receive more than \$100 million in Safe Schools/Healthy Students grants in an effort to find and fund the best ideas to reduce youth violence through community-based collaborative efforts. These funds will allow communities to implement important measures such as hiring more security personnel, installing security equipment, and improving student mental health services.

I have also called upon the Congress to do its part by passing a juvenile crime bill that closes the dangerous gun show loophole, requires child safety locks for guns, and bans the importation of large-capacity ammunition clips. I will continue to fight hard to win passage of these commonsense measures to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

As we observe this year's National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, I encourage every student in America to sign a Student Pledge Against Gun Violence, a solemn oath never to bring a gun to school and never to use a gun to settle a dispute. More than one million students signed the pledge last year, and I hope that many more will participate this year. I also urge all Americans to make their voices heard and support efforts to reduce gun violence. We need every sector of our society—families, educators, communities, businesses, religious leaders, policymakers, and members of law enforcement—to join together in this crusade to end the cycle of violence and create a brighter, safer future for our children.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 21, 1999, as a National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence. On this day, I call upon all Americans to commit themselves anew to helping our young people avoid violence, to setting a good example, and to restoring our schools and neighborhoods as safe havens for learning and recreation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 25, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 26.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Edward M. Kennedy

October 21, 1999

Thank you. Is this a rowdy crowd or what? [Laughter] You know, I'm not used to showing up and being the straight man. [Laughter] This is a very emotional moment for me. [Laughter] When I was in the 10th grade, Ted Kennedy was in the Senate. [Laughter] And when I retire from two terms as President, Ted Kennedy will be in the Senate. [Laughter] And I resent it. [Laughter]

I don't know what Patrick's doing here. He's supposed to be raising money for House Members. [Laughter] You may have cost us four seats tonight, with all this money going here. [Laughter] Actually, he got an excused absence from Master Gephardt to come here tonight, and I'm grateful.

Let me say a couple of words seriously. I am genuinely honored to be here. I love Edward Kennedy. And I am something of a student of the history of our country. I just—one of our guests tonight gave me a biography of Chester Arthur, because I don't own one. I've got this great—I've read all about all of our Presidents; I've studied the history of the United States Congress.

I do believe that any fair reading of that history would say that Edward Kennedy was one of the four or five most productive, ablest, greatest United States Senators that ever served this great Republic of ours.

And I am grateful for this family's commitment to public service. There is no question—I was a Governor for 12 years, and I care a lot about these issues that the States deal with. There's no question that Kathleen has done more with the job of Lieutenant Governor than any person in her position in the United States of America, and that Maryland was the first State—thanks to her—to make community service a part of the requirement of being a student in the public schools. And that is very, very important.

And you know, I said I was in the 10th grade when Ted went to the Senate. Patrick looks like he's in the 10th grade—[laughter]—and yet, here he is. You know, he's been here 3½ months or something in the Congress, and he's already the head of the campaign committee. [Laughter] So I think that there is no limit to what he can and will do in the Congress. And you already heard him say he's trying to recruit one of his brothers—I mean one of Kathleen's brothers—to run for the Congress in Illinois. So we are grateful for the service of this Senator and this family. And, you know, Vicki is my neighbor from Louisiana, so they've shown a certain affinity for Southerners. [Laughter]

I want you to know something else, too, that I'm grateful for. In January of 1992 Jackie came to a fundraiser for me when I was running fifth in New Hampshire, and reached out to my wife and to my daughter in ways that I will never forget. One month after, her son had also come to an event for me, when I think I was running sixth in New Hampshire. [Laughter] So we've had this marvelous friendship.

Sargent Shriver was, yesterday, with me when we celebrated the fifth anniversary of AmeriCorps. We've had 150,000 young people in 5 years serve their country in citizen service, earned some money to go to college. We've done a lot of things together.

But the reason that you're here, and the reason you ought to be here, is that a lot of big decisions are going to be made in the next few years. And it'll make a big difference if Ted Kennedy is in the Senate. We also have a genuine, legitimate chance to be in the congressional majority again. And that's very important.

But I said in '92 if people would vote for me, I would try to reinstitute the basic values of opportunity, responsibility, and community. I said that we would try some new ideas that would transform our country. I said in '96, "If you'll reelect me, I'll try to build this country a bridge to the 21st century." I might have said, in starker terms, that this country was in tough shape in '92, and drifting and divided. A lot of people have forgotten that.

And I feel that we have sort of turned around, just like a big ship in the middle of the ocean, and we're steaming in the right

direction. Any statistic I could quote—we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, 19½ million new jobs, the highest homeownership ever. And just listen—when people ask you why they ought to be for the Democrats—we have the lowest unemployment in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the lowest murder rate in 31 years, the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years, all with a Government that is the smallest it's been since John Kennedy was President in 1962, 37 years ago. And Ted Kennedy was at the center of every decision that was made that made that possible. And you should be proud of that.

Now, next time you meet somebody that says they're going to vote for a Republican for the Congress or the White House, you give them those statistics and ask them what their answer is.

But what I want to tell you is we can build that bridge. But the people of this country are going to make some profound decisions. And there are profound differences. Are we really going to do what the Republicans want, and give all the non-Social Security surplus away in a tax cut? If they get the White House and Congress, we will.

Are we going to meet the challenge of the aging of America? The number of people over 65 is going to double in 30 years. I hope to live to be one of them. *[Laughter]* We'll have two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. We have a chance and an obligation to save Social Security, to reform Medicare, to restore some of the cuts we put in that were excessive 2 years ago, to add a prescription drug benefit, and to take care of the elderly of this country, which all of the young people should favor, because it means they won't have to do it and they'll have the money to raise our grandchildren. It's a big issue.

Are we going to take seriously our responsibility to the largest and most diverse group of students in our history, and modernize their schools and connect their classrooms to the Internet, and give them teachers so they'll have small classes with well-trained teachers in the early grades, and give them the after-school and the summer school pro-

grams they need? Or are we going to squander that opportunity?

Are we going to do something, finally, for the people and places that have been left behind in this recovery? Yes, we've got the lowest poverty rate in 20 years; that's the good news. The bad news is that there's still about 20 percent of our kids in poverty and a higher percentage of minority children. And we have a chance to bring the benefits of enterprise to people who want to work in places left behind. Are we going to do it or walk away from it?

And I hope to persuade Congress that—well, we can do all this and still, over the next 15 years pay down our debt until we're debt-free for the first time since 1835. And I think another one of your nephews, Joe Kennedy, used to talk about this when he was in Congress: the liberal party ought to be for doing that, because it means lower interest rates; more jobs; more investment; higher incomes; lower costs for home loans, for student loans, for car loans, and for credit cards. It means average people will live better. And I think we ought to do it, since we can meet our other responsibilities as well.

These are just some of the big opportunities that are out there that we're for. And there are big differences on whether we ought to have a Patients' Bill of Rights; big differences on whether we ought to continue to have responsible measures to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and kids.

We are 6 months past that Columbine massacre, and we still haven't acted to close the gun show loophole. And the same crowd that's blocking it said, when we passed the Brady bill in 1993, that the crooks don't get their guns at gun shops; they get them at gun shows and flea markets; you won't stop anybody with the Brady bill. Well, 400,000 stops later, they have quit making that argument, but now they don't want us to do a background check where they said the crooks were buying the guns.

And let me tell you something else that you ought to say—I want people to use this. This is not just a matter of crime. The accidental death rate of children from guns in the United States is 9 times higher than the combined death rate of the next 25 biggest industrial countries in the world. Let me say

that again: 9 times higher than the next 25 industrial countries combined—together.

So we've still got a lot of work to do. And I guess what I want to tell you is, I'm grateful that I had a chance to serve. I'm not running for anything. I'm here—I kind of wish I were, actually, but I'm not. [*Laughter*] And I'm here, I'm here because I care about my country. I care about my daughter's world. I care about the grandchildren I hope to have someday. And we've turned this country around.

In my lifetime, we have never had a chance like this. When President Kennedy and President Johnson served, we had a good economy, but they had to deal with the crisis of civil rights and the problems of the cold war.

We have an opportunity not just to eliminate legal discrimination—which we ought to continue to do with the “Employment Non-Discrimination Act” and all of that—but we have an opportunity to create the world of our dreams.

That's why I was upset about the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and I'm mad that we're not paying our U.N. dues, and why I think we ought to pay off the debt of the world's poorest countries—because we can create the world of our dreams, at home and beyond our borders. And there is nobody better qualified to be the conscience and the heart and the tactical leader of that struggle than Senator Kennedy. Nobody. This is a big deal.

So I'm telling you, I want you to feel this. I am grateful for having had the chance to serve. I am grateful that all these numbers I can reel off, and they sound so good. But the truth is, nobody thinks we have given everyone opportunity. No one thinks we have really built one America. No one believes this country is as safe as it can be. No one believes we've met all our obligations to the environment. No one believes that we have met our obligations or seized our opportunities in the world toward which we're moving.

So beyond all the issue, you just have to keep this simple idea in mind: This country is in good shape, and it is moving in the right direction. And for the only time in my lifetime, as a people, we have a chance to shape

the future of our dreams. It will only happen if we elect the right dreamers.

Thank you for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:52 p.m. in the a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of Maryland; Vicki Kennedy, wife of Senator Edward M. Kennedy; Sargent Shriver, first Director of the Peace Corps; and former Representative Joseph P. Kennedy II.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

October 21, 1999

Thank you. I will be brief, because I want to spend most of our time in a conversation. But I would like to say a few things.

First, I want to thank Senator Kerry for once again opening his home. I was here not very long ago with at least some of you who are here. I want to thank him for his genuine commitment to modernizing our party and to making it an instrument of progress and an instrument for bringing our country together. And I'm very grateful for the truly exceptional effort he's made.

On the way in, Joe Andrew, our DNC chair, said that John Kerry had done more personally than any other Member of the Congress to try to help modernize and strengthen our party, in the last few months, particularly. So I thank you for that. And I thank Teresa in her absence, and I think she did the right thing to fulfill her responsibility. [*Laughter*] We always say we're for opportunity and responsibility, and—[*laughter*]—she's had a fair share of one and discharged the lion's share of another. And we appreciate that.

I want to thank Governor Romer and Beth Dozoretz and all of the other people who are here from the Democratic Party and all of you.

Let me just say—I want to tell you a story. A lot of you know that Hillary and I—because of her, not me; it was her idea—have had a series of evenings at the White House called Millennium Evenings, this year, which we have primarily disseminated to the public at large through the Internet. It's been covered by C-SPAN and occasionally by CNN

and obviously by print reporters who come in. But the primary means of connecting to these Millennium Evenings has been through the Internet. And at the end of whatever we do, we allow people to—not only in the audience; there are always 200, 300 people in the audience—we allow people to send us questions from all over the world.

And it's been a fascinating thing. We started off with a history of the United States and where we are now compared to the roots of our Founders, in a lecture by Bernard Bailyn, the distinguished professor at Harvard. We've had a poetry night with the last three poet laureates of our country and a lot of inner-city kids in Washington and all kinds of people in-between, reading their poems and talking about poetry.

The great Wynton Marsalis came and played and lectured on the history of jazz as a unique American art form in the 20th century. Steven Hawking came all the way from Cambridge and talked about black holes and undiscovered galaxies of the 21st century and what it will mean for the nature and our understanding of time. And we've had eight of these evenings. It's been amazing. Elie Wiesel talked about the price of indifference in the 20th century and how we couldn't have it in the 21st.

Last week we had a man named Lander from Harvard who's an expert in genomics, and a man named Cerf from MCI that had something to do with the establishment of the Internet, the architect, that all of you know. And what they were talking about was the intersection of genomics and the revolution in computer technology.

And the scientist, the genomics guy, said that it would really not have been possible, first to decode the human gene and then to figure out anything useful to do with the decoding, were it not for the computer and for digital technology, generally. And he said—he was talking about how one of the things we've been trying to do in medical research, for example, is to deal with spinal cord injuries. And last year, for the very first time, we spent a lot of money, and Christopher Reeve, since he was injured, has been very instrumental in getting higher levels of research put into this issue. And last year, for the first time, we succeeded in getting nerves

transferred from the body of a laboratory animal, a rat, to the animal's spine which had been severed, and the animal actually took the transplant and had movement in its lower limbs—the first time it had ever been done in any living organism that we know of with a spinal cord that had been severed.

So what this guy said, he said he believes that this whole effort will be overtaken by the capacity of us to use a digital device that can be inserted into spines, that will replicate all nerve movements, and take the right signals and give them. And he said—he offered as exhibit A, as sort of prelude to that, his wife, Mr. Cerf's wife, who had been profoundly deaf for 50 years, totally beyond the reach of hearing aids, and a small digital device was inserted deep in her ears, and she heard for the first time in 50 years. And she got up and talked about that.

Then the genomics guy—we started talking about what all this meant for the breakdown of the gene. Then we got into, what does genetics tell us about society? And he made the following point: that in spite of the fact that you're talking about 100,000 genes and, ultimately, billions of permutations, that all human beings are 99.9 percent the same genetically.

And then, against the background of all the racial and ethnic conflicts in the world today, he made what I thought was a rather stunning statement—that I didn't know, at least; maybe a lot of you do know this. He said, if you take any substantial group of people—like if you take, say we had a group of people from India, 100 Indians and then let's say we had 100 Chinese and let's say we had 100 people from Nigeria and let's say we had 100 people from France—he said that the genetic differences of individuals within the group would be greater than the genetic differences as a whole of the French and the Indians and the Chinese and the Nigerians. And therefore, there was no rational basis, which we all knew anyway, but it was nice to have it confirmed scientifically, that there was no rational basis for this human emotion of fear of the other.

Well, what's all this got to do with technology? What I'm interested in—everything I can do while my time of service is here, before it's over, in maximizing the ability of

our country to use technology for economic empowerment, for educational empowerment, for political empowerment, and to do it in a way that promotes unity, not division. And that's what I would like to talk about.

And I think the Democratic Party is the principal engine in our time of economic empowerment, political empowerment, educational empowerment and certainly, compared with all the alternatives, the major force for the cohesion and unity of our society as we move forward. So that's why I'm glad all of you are here. I think this is a huge issue.

Eric and I had some talks about how we could close the digital divide, and of course, we've worked very hard on it, with the Vice President's leadership, to make sure by the time we get through with our millennium celebration, we'll have all of our classrooms hooked up to the Internet.

But if you think about what it might mean economically for poor people in America, if Internet access were as dense as telephone access in America, I think it would have a very positive economic impact. I believe cell phones and computers, if properly distributed, can save 30 years of educational and economic development in a lot of the poorest countries in this world and can permit an economic development that is far less damaging to the environment.

And I believe that technology, properly used, can not only give people a more interactive and personal engagement in the political process but can, in the process, dramatically reduce the sense of cynicism and alienation, a sense that one person doesn't matter and that none of this really amounts to much.

So my mind is always thinking about this, but everyone knows that I'm quite technologically challenged. So I need people like you to help me and tell me what to do and how to do it. So that's why I'm here; that's why I'm glad you're here; and I'm very grateful for your presence and your commitment.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:03 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Senator John Kerry, dinner host, and his wife, Teresa; former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, former general chair, and Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair; Democratic National Committee; Eric

Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research; and Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president for Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, and his wife, Sigrid.

Memorandum on Waiver and Certification of Statutory Provisions Regarding the Palestine Liberation Organization

October 21, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 00-2

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Waiver and Certification of Statutory Provisions Regarding the Palestine Liberation Organization

Pursuant to the authority and conditions contained in section 540(d) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105-277), as provided for in the Joint Resolution Making Continuing Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2000, and for Other Purposes, I hereby determine and certify that it is important to the national security interests of the United States to waive the provisions of section 1003 of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1987, Public Law 100-204.

This waiver shall be effective for a period of 6 months from the date hereof.

You are authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 22. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Remarks to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

October 22, 1999

Thank you. Thank you so much.

I was thinking how much help I need in trying to get what I say to certain people in the Congress not to go in one ear and out the other. [Laughter] And that maybe I

should go through this training program. [Laughter] I believe everything Carole Moyer said, except the part about having been a teacher for 32 years. She looks like she was about 12 when she started. [Laughter]

I want to thank Carole and your chair, Barbara Kelley. Thank you, Jim Kelley and Bob Wehling and Betty Hastert and all the others that are involved with the board. I'm glad to see the president of the National Education Association, Bob Chase, here. Thank you for coming, sir, for your support.

And I have been honored to support this endeavor, since before I was President, as has been said. But the person who deserves all the credit, in my view, without whom none of us would be here today, is Governor Jim Hunt from North Carolina. Thank you. Thank you.

I've told this story before, but I probably wouldn't be here today, either, because in 1979, Jim Hunt, who was a far senior Governor to me then, decided that I should become the vice chair of the Democratic Governors' Association. And then I became the chair. Then I became the youngest former Governor in history, but that wasn't his fault. [Laughter] But it was sort of my board certification in national politics that Jim Hunt gave me. So I might not be here as President today if it weren't for him, either.

This has been a great week for me and for our administration. We celebrated the fifth anniversary of AmeriCorps, our national service program. And we've now had 150,000 young people serve and earn credit for going to college. It took the Peace Corps about 23 years to have that many volunteers. So that's been really great. And we also, I might say, have been able to get from the Congress the largest expansion in the Peace Corps in a generation, as well. That's been a very good thing.

Today Hillary and I are sponsoring a White House Conference on Philanthropy. And we're going to try to find ways not only to increase the aggregate level of private giving in the aftermath of the vast amounts of wealth that have been generated in our country in the last 7 years but to target it in the right way, in ways that I hope it will help your children and your concern.

I even had a pretty good meeting with the congressional leadership. [Laughter] We're actually working to try to work through our differences on the budget, and I'll have more to say about that in a few moments. A couple of them who weren't there persist in trying to accuse us of doing what they have done on the Social Security surplus. But I'm committed to turn the other cheek until we see if we can work it out together. I guess it's easier when you're not running for anything to do that. [Laughter]

You might find this interesting, as a sort of a prelude to what I want to say. Hillary had this great idea that we should do some special things for the millennium, that we shouldn't build a big building or anything like that; we should try to preserve as many of our big, national treasures as possible, like the Star Spangled Banner and the Bill of Rights and the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, all of which are in danger—and so we have been working to raise the funds to do that—that we should go around the country and help people in every community preserve their own piece of our national heritage; that we should have a big—then we should think about the future we want and make a big effort to increase research dollars, which we have done; and that we should sponsor at the White House an unusual set of what she called Millennium Evenings, where we would talk about topics that were either important to the last century, the one we're leaving, or important to the next century.

It has been an amazing experience, an amazing educational experience. C-SPAN covers all of these. Sometimes CNN takes a big chunk. But the main way by which we communicate with the rest of the country and the rest of the world is through the Internet, and at the end of our little programs, we take Internet questions. They always come in from all over the world. It's just an amazing experience.

We started out with the great professor of American history and constitutional history Bernard Bailyn, from Harvard, who talked about our past and our institutions and how we got started and how that will be relevant to the 21st century. We've had all kinds of other fascinating topics. We had the three

last poet laureates of America come with inner-city kids from Washington and just ordinary citizens, read poetry and talk about what it meant. We had the great Wynton Marsalis, the only living musician from New Orleans—he is the only living musician who is both the best classical and the best jazz musician in his instrument in the world, come and talk about the history of jazz as a uniquely American art form in the 20th century.

We had the great British scientist Steven Hawking, who has lived longer with Lou Gehrig's disease than anyone else, come and talk about black holes and undiscovered galaxies in space and how our notion of time will alter and our understanding of it will alter in the 21st century. Elie Wiesel came and talked about the price of indifference, from the Holocaust forward, and all the racial and ethnic turmoil we've had. It's been amazing.

But last week we had a man named Vint Cerf there, who was sort of the creator of the architecture of the Internet, who sent the first E-mail, 18 years ago, to his profoundly deaf wife, who had been deaf from early childhood and so deaf that no hearing aids would help her. So the E-mail got started as a way of communicating. He was there, along with a professor from Harvard of genomics, named Lander, who was talking about our efforts to complete the human genome project, to break down all the secrets of the gene.

Now, what they did was, they talked about the interconnection of the computer revolution to the genomics revolution. And both said, "Look, we couldn't be unlocking the mysteries of the gene if it weren't for computer advances, because that's really what enables us to map out the gene, chart it, and see what's going on. And it will also enable us to actually find practical applications for the challenges we find when we look at the human gene structure."

And then Mr. Cerf, who was the Internet fellow who did the E-mail 18 years ago to his wife said, "Now, for example, my wife was profoundly deaf for 50 years. And a very small digital device has now been inserted deep within both her ears, and she can hear after 50 years of total deafness." And he in-

troduced her, and she stood up, and she talked about what it was like. She said, "I went to a James Taylor concert the other night"—[laughter]—some of you are too young to appreciate this. [Laughter] And she said, "I'm quite sure I'm the only person who heard 'Fire and Rain' for the first time in the late nineties." It was an amazing thing. She talked about what it was like to hear the birds sing in the morning.

But the point is, digital technology combined with medical science made this possible. And they speculated that—we've been spending a lot of time in the medical research trying to help people with spinal cord injuries. And last year we have a nerve transplantation in a laboratory animal from the legs to the spine in a way that for the first time ever in the lab with an animal allowed an animal with a severed spine to recover movement in its lower limbs. Stunning! These people were saying, what we may be able to do now is to develop digital technology, key to the genetic breakdowns in the nerves, that we can insert—we can actually insert a device in the spine that will replicate the normal spine and give people movement without having to figure out whether the nerve transplants will take.

What does all that have to do with you? First of all, it means that it's important that all of our children learn and that we develop a level of comfort with basic technology and basic scientific concepts that most people didn't need in times past.

The second point I want to make to you, which will be important to you because you know we have the largest and most diverse student population in history, is the genomist said—a fascinating thing—he said we've got these 100,000 genes and billions of possible permutations, but what you should know is that all human beings, genetically, are literally 99.9 percent the same.

He said the second thing you should know, which he said was to him even more amazing, is if you take any given racial group—let's say you had a bunch of Hispanics here and a bunch of Asians here and you had people from the Mediterranean countries and Europe here, and people from an African country over here—he said, if you get 100 people in each of these separate racial groups, the

genetic differences of the individuals within the group would be greater than the genetic differences from group to group.

Very interesting—providing scientific support for what you try to do every day, which is to convince your kids that all children can learn, that there is no reason for us to fight with one another because of our differences, that all these troubles that are gripping the world, all over the world, the racial, the ethnic, the tribal, the religious differences have to be somehow overcome by understanding and teaching people that our common humanity is more important than the differences and that once you accept that, then the differences become interesting and make life more fun. But it is a very important thing, and it shows, again, the importance of learning to our common progress on this Earth.

Now, that's why I think what all of you have done with the board certification is so important. I remember when you came to the White House with only 177 board-certified teachers. Some of you were there then. Now there's not enough room to keep you all in the White House, and the next time we might have to use RFK Stadium to have a meeting of all of you, and I would like that very much. [*Laughter*]

I am very grateful for the progress that our country has made economically, socially, and in education. I am grateful that we've got the longest peacetime expansion in history and 19½ million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare roles in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years, lowest murder rate in 31 years, first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, and the Government is the same size it was when John Kennedy was here in 1962, 37 years ago. We have worked at this.

But it's not enough. I am glad that we have virtually opened the doors of college to all people with the HOPE scholarships and the expanded Pell grants. I am glad we probably will succeed in connecting all of our classrooms to the Internet by 2000, except in the places where the school buildings are literally too decrepit to accept the wiring. I am glad that we have dramatically increased our investment in after-school programs. But there is more to do.

I am very proud that the idea of standards is now taking root around the country. In 1996—listen to this—in 1996 there were only 14 States in the country that had measurable standards for student performance. Today there are 50. But there are still only about a dozen that have genuine accountability measures when the standards aren't met and aggressive strategies to identify failing schools and to turn them around. North Carolina does; that's one of the reasons they've had the best increases in student performance in the country. But all over the country, you see test scores going up even in the poorest inner-city and rural schools.

Now, I say that—and I gave you all this introductory information—to try to set the proper context for the present budget debate. To most Americans, it's a lot of numbers and a lot of noise. To most Americans, it's the Republicans making the absurd claim that the Democrats want to spend the Social Security surplus, which has nothing to do with anything that's really going on up there.

But there are things going on in the budget debate which are, in some ways, different from the ones we've had in the past but still very important. When it comes to education, the debate is not so much about money anymore as it is about values, priorities, and direction, not just about how much we spend but how we spend it. And a big part of this debate is about honoring our obligation to our children and our future. I was glad that you said your classes were smaller but still not small enough. [*Laughter*] There are many, many tens of thousands of teachers who can make that statement because we had the biggest class, biggest student load in history.

So last year, right before the election when everybody said—you know, there was so much acrimony in Washington; we can never get anything done—we passed this remarkable education budget that provided more funds for after-school programs and a big downpayment on my commitment for 100,000 more teachers to lower class sizes, first in the early grades and then, when those class size numbers are met, the districts can have the money to use it elsewhere.

And it was wonderful. The money we appropriated was enough for about 30,000 of

those 100,000 teachers, which is a lot in one year. It took us, for example, 5 years to get to our goal of 100,000 police officers. So I look forward to coming back this year and taking the second tranche. And imagine my surprise when the leadership of the Republican Congress, who had gone home and happily campaigned on this, and how it might have been a Republican program because there was no bureaucracy—we just gave the school districts the money and they hired the teachers—all of a sudden voted to do away with it, not only not to expand it above 30,000 but to take away the requirement that the money that was going to the teachers, go to them.

Now, I don't understand exactly what's going on, but I do intend to stop it if I can because I think that's a mistake. That's bad educational policy. We need to help the school districts hire more teachers. Last year we agreed, and we should do it again. So one of the things the budget debate is all about is whether we will continue our commitment to help our schools hire 100,000 well-qualified teachers. And we have to reject the idea that we can't raise both the numbers of teachers in the classroom and the standards we hold them to.

Our budget invests in improving teacher quality. We know one of the most important factors in a child's educational success is a trained, dedicated, talented teacher. And through your good work, we're adding more and more, and I intend to keep supporting you in every way I can. I wish and I hope that as time goes on we'll get more explicit support from the majority in Congress for this program, because it's so important.

For all the good work you're doing, the fact is, a quarter of all secondary school teachers don't have college majors or even minors in the subjects they teach. Students with the highest minority enrollment have less than a 50–50 chance of having a math or science teacher with a license or degree in the field. Now, we can do better than that. And we have to.

I think we should require States and school districts receiving Federal funds to stop the practice of allowing children to be taught by uncertified teachers. School districts should do that. So when we reauthorize the Element-

tary and Secondary Education Act, one of the things we ought to do is to say, if you want the Federal money, this is one of the things you have to do. I think it's important. That's one of the things that our debate is all about.

But we also have to invest. I've asked Congress to invest in recruiting, training, and supporting high-quality teachers in high-poverty areas. We have offered scholarships to a number of people that go to school and then, in effect, wipe off the cost of their education if they will go into areas where there is a high need. I have asked for an expansion of the troops for teachers initiative, which has already helped 3,000 active duty soldiers, who were planning to leave the military anyway, find rewarding second careers in teaching in our public schools.

The budget bill, even though it has quite a lot of money in it—for reasons I don't understand—underfunds the teacher quality initiatives and doesn't provide a single penny for the troops for teachers programs. We need more and better teachers. The skills that a lot of these career military people have are desperately needed in a lot of the places where there is a significant teacher shortage. So that's what I am fighting for. It's not about money. It is about things that we know will work that will help our kids. That's one of the things this budget debate is all about.

It's also about accountability. Where there is rising accountability to go with rising standards and a strategy to help people meet the standards, not just define them as failures, we have seen progress. Two years ago, North Carolina sent assistance teams to their 15 lowest performing schools. A year later, 14 of them had met their goals and were taken off the list—one year. We have seen the same kind of improvement in Chicago, Dade County, many other places. I was in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Chicago, in the large Robert Taylor Homes project, where they had an elementary school with terrible performance. In 2 years—2 years—they doubled their math scores and tripled their reading scores.

So we can, by the same sort of concentrated effort—remember, if we're 99.9 percent the same genetically, we owe it to

these kids to give them their chance at the brass ring of their life.

Our budget has \$200 million to help States and school districts identify, turn around, or shut down the lowest performing schools. For example, districts could send board-certified teachers to help students and teachers get their schools back on track. Unfortunately, this Republican budget bill doesn't put a dime into the strategy of turning around low-performing schools. This is not just about saying, "Well, I put that money up there, and they'll figure out how to spend it." If you know what works, based not on what somebody in Washington thinks works but based on what you proved works at the grassroots level, we have an obligation, in a world of limited resources, to spend the money on what you have told us and what you have demonstrated to us, works. That's what this budget debate is all about.

That's why we've invested in after-school and summer school programs, providing extended learning time so that school districts can say, "Okay, we're ending the practice of social promotion, but we're not branding the kids failures. We're giving them a chance to succeed."

And let me say another thing that I think will be increasingly important as we try to come to grips with the dropout rate and the consequences of it, is to reach young people at an early age to get them excited about academic achievement and to give them the sense that they have a personal possibility in the future.

That's why we have worked hard to establish last year this GEAR UP mentoring initiative which allows college students and others to go into middle schools and show young people that if they do their work and they learn their subjects that they can all go on to college. Explain to them the HOPE scholarship. Explain to them the Pell grant. Show them, let them take home to their families exactly what kind of assistance they'll be able to get, so that they will know it is actual reality. It isn't enough to open the doors of college to all Americans. People have to know they've been opened. They have to be aware of these things.

We do things in Washington; I sign a bill; we just assume everybody knows about it.

That is the beginning, not the end. If nobody knows about these things, they might as well have not have been done. So that's a big part of what this budget is all about.

We also have to ensure greater access of all kinds of students to a successful and complete high school education. That's what our Hispanic education action plan is all about. That's our fastest growing student group. And the Hispanic dropout rate exceeds 30 percent. It's a big problem. Last year, for all practical purposes, the African-American and white majority high school graduation rates were identical. There was a smidgen of a difference for the first time ever in our history. That's very good.

I might say that I don't think either one of them were quite high enough, but they're good. They're up in the high eighties percent. Our national goal that we set 10 years ago was 90 percent on-time graduation. But that's good. But the Hispanic dropout rate—I think largely rooted in the fact that you've got a lot of first generation immigrant families whose first language is not English, compounding the fact that a lot of those kids may think they can get out and work for their families because they all just got here. And all first generation immigrant families, going back 100 years or more, have had a heritage of people of all ages in the family working.

But the point is that long-term economic consequences to these children, and therefore to their families, are far more adverse and far more severe now than they would have been 30 years ago to dropping out. And a 30-percent dropout rate is simply too high.

So one of my problems with this budget bill is that it underfunds the after-school programs, the summer programs. The House bill actually would have shut down the GEAR UP program that they created last year and bragged about in the election, and it's way short on the Hispanic education action priority. So we've got to give people the tools they need to succeed.

Finally, this was mentioned earlier, but I am still fighting for our bill to build or modernize 6,000 schools. There are too many kids in old school buildings that can't be wired, too many kids in house trailers, and too many school districts that can't undertake the costs of the building program all by themselves.

So here is where we are. The good news is that we have, I think, an appropriate amount of money that has been set aside for education. The good news is yesterday we had our voucher debate, and the public school side won.

That's the good news. But we do not have anything like having—because at this moment we have this surplus and we're at a moment of prosperity, we were able to agree generally on what I think is an adequate increase in funding. But there is no commitment yet for more and better teachers, for smaller classes, for increased accountability, for higher standards, for giving the tools out there that we know that you know work.

So the good news is that the debate is not about dollars. But the more important news is it is very much about direction. It is very much about direction. And just as I fought to get a modest amount of Federal money to support your program, because I do believe that when you are certified and you go through this process, it is not only good for you and good for your students; it's good for everybody that you come in contact with in your school.

We were talking about, now you can see on the near horizon 25,000 of them. The reason that I said 100,000—that I want at least 100,000 board-certified teachers is, I do believe when you are dense enough, when there is one of you in every school building in America, there will be an exponential increase in your impact, that it will change the whole culture of virtually every school. And your skills and what you learn and how you will impart it to your colleagues will then be exploding, echoing across the country in a way that will embrace all the children in all our schools.

But if you believe in what you've done, then I ask you to also believe in this, and help us say, "Okay"—to the Congress—"thank you very much for not trying to cut out the money anymore. That's a big first step. But it does matter how you spend it."

And we're not trying to micromanage the schools. Dick Riley has gotten rid of two-thirds of the paperwork requirement on States and local school districts. We have scrapped more rules and regulations than all the previous administrations who railed

about the Federal Government put together. But what we have not done is to abandon our responsibility to take the research and the reports from the grassroots level and say, if we're going to spend this money, since it's limited, we have to spend it in ways that it will have the highest impact—more teachers, higher standards, the tools that you need to do what you're out there trying to do.

So I ask you to support it and help us, and I think we will prevail.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Yorktown Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency Washington. In his remarks, he referred to Carole D. Moyer, National Board Certified Teacher, Salem Elementary School, Columbus, OH; Barbara B. Kelley, chair, James A. Kelley, founding president, and Robert L. Wehling, vice chair, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; Betty Hastert, wife of House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert; and Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president for Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, and his wife, Sigrid; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Radio Remarks on Signing Agriculture Appropriations Legislation

October 22, 1999

Today I am signing into law the agriculture appropriations bill. This legislation provides critical funding for the Department of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration programs, including basic farm support programs, WIC, food safety efforts, and other measures to protect and support our rural communities.

It also provides emergency funds to assist our Nation's farmers and ranchers who are suffering the second year in a row of plummeting crop prices and, for many, record livestock losses from severe drought and flooding.

Let me say that I am disappointed that Congress didn't come through with more assistance for farmers and ranchers who suffered this year. This summer's drought and Hurricane Floyd and other natural disasters have inflicted literally billions of dollars in agricultural damage, and we need to do more

to help those farmers who have incurred these losses through no fault of their own.

Congress also has not responded effectively to the crisis facing many farms because of the sustained low prices of most commodities. This is the second year in a row that substantial Federal assistance has been needed above and beyond our regular farm programs.

Now, while these additional funds have been absolutely critical, the very fact that we've needed them points out the underlying flaws in the 1996 farm bill. For all its positive features, that bill simply did not do enough to help our farmers and ranchers cope in crisis. It doesn't give the USDA the tools it needs to help farmers and ranchers thrive in the short and long term. It doesn't direct payments to where they're most needed. And it's providing payments to those who aren't even farming anymore.

The bottom line is this: We need to revise, revamp, and improve the 1996 farm bill. It is not providing adequate support that our farmers need to prosper. So once again, I urge Congress to work to fix the farm bill permanently so American farmers can have an adequate safety net, just as the Vice President and I have worked hard to reinvent Government and give Government more impact and more effectiveness, even though we have the smallest Federal Government since 1962. We must take those kinds of steps, the necessary steps to rewrite this flawed farm legislation. The men and women who work every day to give us the world's most affordable and abundant food supply deserve nothing less.

So this is not a perfect piece of legislation, but I am signing it because our farmers are facing a true emergency and they can't wait. Their livelihoods—in some cases, their very survival—depend upon getting this bill signed and assistance delivered now.

Franklin Roosevelt once said that our farmers are the source from which the reservoirs of our Nation's strength are constantly renewed. We must strengthen and support our farms and farm families, just as they have sustained us throughout our history and will into the future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 11:30 a.m. on October 22 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the White House Conference on Philanthropy October 22, 1999

Thank you, and good afternoon. I am delighted to welcome all of you here. I thank all those who are here from our Government and all of you who have come from all over our country and all walks of life to this very, very important meeting.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to Hillary for yet another wonderful idea. This was a good idea to have this conference. And all of you who have helped on any of these millennium projects, I think it's done us a lot of good to take time out and think about the really big issues in our society and how we want them to play out in the years ahead. And particularly, I think this is an important issue at an important moment.

A long time ago, Alexis de Tocqueville said that charity in America was something more than simple compassion; it was a sign of good citizenship. He wrote, "Americans make great and real sacrifices to the public welfare. They hardly ever fail to lend faithful support to one another."

Today, this is a strong tradition, and the face of this tradition is changing. Philanthropy is, like our country, now more diverse as new groups seize and share opportunity in the new economy. It is more democratic, as Americans of all income levels, believe it or not, give at roughly equal levels. It is younger, as the high-tech economy creates a new generation of philanthropists.

I've got to take a little time out. Last night, I had dinner with a lot of these high-tech gurus who made allowances for the fact that I am obviously technologically challenged. [Laughter] And we were talking about how we were all going to relate to each other and maximize the potential of the information age. And I started talking about this conference today, and I said, "We've got to get

more people to give." I said, "I would like it if Internet usage were as dense in America as telephone usage is, if we had 98 percent penetration, everybody had an E-mail address. I think we could have a dramatic impact on education and on poverty. I think we could skip a whole generation of development. And how are we going to get this done?"

So there is this guy standing there. He's 27 years old, you know. He says, "Well, you know, when I got out of college, I started this company, and 3 years later, I sold it for \$150 million, and I started three others." And he said, "What you need is founder stock." [Laughter] He said, "We need to go all over America and gather up founder stock and put it in a big trust to make universal the access to the Internet." He said, "Because you've got all these guys like me that don't know we're rich yet. We're still living on \$30,000, and we've got all this stock." [Laughter] So he said, "That's what you need."

So I've now given you my contribution to this conference—[laughter]—which I learned at the foot of a 28-year-old last night. [Laughter] So, I mean, that's encouraging to people like me who aren't young, you know? [Laughter] We don't have to depend on the Rockefellers and the Mellons and the Carnegies or even the Paul Newmans. We can go get founder stock. [Laughter]

I also think it's important to point out that not only the ways of giving are changing but the people—when I saw that film, I was so proud that there was a Federal employee that had given every single month for 25 years, someone obviously of modest means, doubtless a lot of other claims on her income. So I want to thank people like Mary Grayson and others who are giving. And I think we ought to think about new opportunities, or I think the buzz word is "portals," that are opening in the world of on-line philanthropy and how we can make sure that we can continue not only to increase the volume of money but to broaden the base of giving.

We'll hear today about venture philanthropists and startup charities and other ways in which the entrepreneurial spirit is invading and energizing this field.

I would like to also point out that volunteering is another important way of giving.

This week Hillary and I celebrated the fifth anniversary of AmeriCorps. And we've already had 150,000 young people serve, and I'm very, very proud of that. I think that is an important thing to say. In a lot of ways, the measure of our life and our happiness is—to paraphrase one of the many wonderful things Martin Luther King said, can be answered by the question: What are you doing for others?

So I'm encouraged by this conference, by the energy here. Some of my favorite people in all our country are out here in this audience today, people I have admired, some of you for 20 or 30 years, for all the things that I have watched you do for others. And I thank you for coming.

I am glad that the sheer volume of charitable giving is going off the charts, but I think, as we've had this phenomenal increase in wealth in our country, I would feel even better if the percentage of our national income devoted to charitable giving had gone up just a little bit. You heard Hillary say what we could do if we could just increase it by one percent. But going from 2 to 3 percent is a huge increase. We've been sort of stuck at 2 percent. Now, when the stock market triples, 2 percent is a lot more than it used to be. That's not real pocket change; it's real money.

But if you think about what we could do with just a little more, I think it is really worth pondering. We're having the same debate in Congress now, and I don't want to get into any kind of a political dispute about that, but just let me give you an example. I very much want the United States to take the lead with the rest of the wealthy countries in alleviating the debt of the poorest countries in the world, and the Pope has asked us to do it for the millennium. Now, this is a campaign with a broad base: It's being spearheaded by the Pope and Bono, the lead singer for U2. [Laughter] And even though I am not a candidate for anything anymore, I can spot a big tent when I see it. [Laughter]

So you know, we ought to do this. And this is just a little bit of all the money we've got. And it's just like de Tocqueville said a long time ago: This is not just charity; this is good citizenship. We take this burden off these people. If they are well governed and

they are working hard, we give them a chance to be our partners and friends in a more equal and balanced way for the future.

So there are things for all of us to do. I would like to—I would hope today that I will learn something and that we will learn something about how we can, at least incrementally, increase the percentage of our income we are devoting to philanthropy. I hope we will learn something, as I already said, about the ways we can do it. And I hope we will learn a little bit about whether we can all give smarter and whether we can make sure that the money we are giving is spent in the most effective possible way.

I take it we all begin by accepting that we no longer believe that there is a choice out there, which was never a real choice, between Government meeting all of our society's needs and Government walking away from them all and letting philanthropy do it. We have to have a better partnership, and it will work better if we do.

We need to think about, in Government, whether we can do more things to generate more constructive philanthropy. The Treasury Department will meet with representatives of the nonprofit sector next month to discuss this. And I, in the meanwhile, am going to establish an interagency task force to strengthen our philanthropic partnership between government, nonprofit groups, and citizens, and to ask the Council of Economic Advisers to do me a study on the role of philanthropy in the American economy and how they believe I can increase it.

By analyzing trends in charitable giving, by assessing the impact of the baby boomers' retirement, which—it's going to be interesting to see whether it makes us more or less generous when we retire, this largest of all generations of Americans. It should make us more generous, because the kids in school are finally the first generation bigger than the baby boomers, and they need our help.

But we need to think about that. What's our message going to be to the baby boomers as they move toward retirement? What's our message going to be to people thinking about the shape of our social tensions as we double the number of people over 65 in the next 30 years? What's our message going to be to ourselves, those of us in the baby boom

generation, about how our citizenship responsibilities should grow when we lay down the burdens of retirement, particularly if we've been lucky enough to have a secure way to maintain our standard of living?

This is deserving of an awful lot of thought because there is a whole bunch of us. And on the whole, those who manage to escape a career in politics are going to be better off than any generation in American history. *[Laughter]* So some serious thought needs to be given to this.

Well, I've had a little fun with this today. But I am really grateful to you all for being here. This is a big deal. We all know—the truth is we're all fairly pleased with ourselves for being here because you feel better about your life when you've spent a portion of it doing something for somebody else. And you feel better about the good fortune you have financially if you spend at least a little of it giving something to someone else.

So what we want to do is to start the new millennium poised to do more and to do it better, and to give more chances to more people to participate.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Postal Service employee Mary Grayson; and Pope John Paul II.

Statement on Legislation To Reform the Nation's Financial System

October 22, 1999

Early this morning, my administration reached a tentative agreement with Congress that will modernize the Depression-era laws that govern our financial system. While we are still reviewing the language, this tentative agreement will bring lower costs, more choices, and better protections for consumers. At the same time, it will promote continued investment in America's communities and new opportunities for our financial institutions to compete in the global marketplace. When this potentially historic agreement is finalized, it will strengthen the economy and help consumers, communities, and businesses across America.

As important as it is to modernize our Nation's banking laws, I cannot accept any bill that would weaken the Community Reinvestment Act and undermine our commitment to promoting more investments in underserved communities. That is why I insisted that no bank that fails to meet the needs of our communities should be able to profit from the new insurance and securities powers that this legislation provides. This tentative agreement includes provisions that meet this test and provide for a strong and relevant Community Reinvestment Act.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

October 18

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Newark, NJ.

In the evening, the President traveled to Elizabeth, NJ, and later returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in New Hampshire and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Tropical Storm Floyd on September 16–18.

October 19

In the afternoon, the President met with President Mireya Moscoso of Panama in the Oval Office.

In the evening, the President met with congressional leaders concerning the budget. Later, he attended a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee dinner at Sam & Harry's Restaurant. The President then attended a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee dinner at a private residence.

The President announced his intention to nominate Linda J. Bilmes to be Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration at the Department of Commerce.

October 20

The President announced his intention to appoint Frances Ann Ulmer as a member of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jan A. Hartke as a member of the Enterprise for the Americas Board.

The President declared a major disaster in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Irene on October 14 and continuing.

October 21

In the afternoon, the President met with former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to nominate Marc B. Nathanson to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

October 22

The White House announced that the President will travel to Oslo, Norway, on November 1–2, for a state visit, at the invitation of King Harald V.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted October 18

Herschelle S. Challenor, of Georgia, to be a member of the National Security Education Board for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Submitted October 19

Donna A. Bucella, of Florida, to be U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Florida for the term of 4 years, vice Charles R. Wilson, term expired.

Submitted October 20

Linda J. Bilmes,
of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of
Commerce, vice W. Scott Gould, resigned.

Linda J. Bilmes,
of California, to be Chief Financial Officer,
Department of Commerce, vice W. Scott
Gould, resigned.

James B. Cunningham,
of Pennsylvania, to be a Representative of
the United States of America to the Sessions
of the General Assembly of the United Na-
tions during his tenure of service as Deputy
Representative of the United States of Amer-
ica to the United Nations.

Donald Stuart Hays,
of Virginia, to be an Alternate Representative
of the United States of America to the Ses-
sions of the General Assembly of the United
Nations during his tenure of service as Rep-
resentative of the United States of America
to the United Nations for U.N. Management
and Reform.

Richard C. Tallman,
of Washington, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for
the Ninth Circuit, vice Betty Binns Fletcher,
retired.

James D. Whittemore,
of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the
Middle District of Florida, vice William
Terrell Hodges, retired.

**Checklist
of White House Press Releases**

The following list contains releases of the Office
of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as
items nor covered by entries in the Digest of
Other White House Announcements.

Released October 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of the nomination for U.S.
Attorney for the Middle District of Florida

Released October 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Joe Lockhart

Released October 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Housing and
Urban Development Secretary Andrew
Cuomo on the President's signing of the De-
partments of Veterans Affairs and Housing
and Urban Development, and Independent
Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000

Advance text of remarks by National Security
Adviser Samuel Berger: The Middle East on
the Eve of the Millennium: Building Peace,
Strengthening America's Security

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Dis-
trict Judge for the Middle District of Florida
and U.S. Court of Appeals Judge for the
Ninth Circuit

Released October 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Joe Lockhart

Advance text of remarks by National Security
Adviser Samuel Berger: American Power:
Hegemony, Isolationism or Engagement

Released October 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Joe Lockhart

Announcement: President to Visit Oslo, Nor-
way, November 1–2, 1999

Statement by the Press Secretary on the
President's intention to veto Department of
the Interior appropriations legislation.

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved October 19

S. 559 / Public Law 106–72
To designate the Federal building located at
300 East 8th Street in Austin, Texas as the
“J.J. ‘Jake’ Pickle Federal Building”

2124

Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

H.R. 3036 / Public Law 106–73
To restore motor carrier safety enforcement authority to the Department of Transportation

Approved October 20

H.R. 2684 / Public Law 106–74
Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000

Approved October 21

H.J. Res. 71 / Public Law 106–75
Making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2000, and for other purposes

S. 323 / Public Law 106–76
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999

Approved October 22

H.R. 560 / Public Law 106–77
To designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at the intersection of Comercio and San Justo Streets, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, as the “Jose V. Toledo Federal Building and United States Courthouse”

H.R. 1906 / Public Law 106–78
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000