

holiday season, let's use every avenue possible, including the Internet, to give something back to our communities.

Enjoy the rest of your Thanksgiving weekend, and thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:17 p.m. on November 26 at Camp David, MD, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 26 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on Ulster Unionist Council Action in the Northern Ireland Peace Process

November 27, 1999

I welcome this historic step toward lasting peace in Northern Ireland and congratulate David Trimble on his leadership in bringing about a successful vote in the Ulster Unionist Council. The Ulster Unionist decision today, which follows critical decisions by all the pro-Agreement parties over the past several weeks, is an important move forward to full implementation of the Good Friday accord in all its aspects. Beginning next week, government in Northern Ireland is being put back directly in the hands of all the people. I welcome this progress and urge all parties to continue working together on building the foundations for lasting peace. I pledge the support of the United States to all those who are helping to make possible a brighter future for Northern Ireland.

Remarks on Signing Consolidated Appropriations Legislation for Fiscal Year 2000

November 29, 1999

Thank you. Good afternoon. Please be seated. I want to welcome the Members of Congress who are here, members of the Cabinet, the police officers and teachers who are shielding me from the cold wind—[laughter]—and who represent the big winners in this year's budget. I would like to say a special word of thanks to Jack Lew, Sylvia Mathews, Larry Stein, and Martha Foley for the work that they did on this budget. And I

know that many Members of the Senate and the House who are here brought their staff members who worked on the budget—I want to thank them for their work, as well.

Last January, in my State of the Union Address, I asked our Congress to use this truly historic time of peace and prosperity to meet our generation's responsibilities to the new century—to extend our economic prosperity, improve our education system, make our streets safer, protect our environment, move more Americans from welfare to work, prepare for the aging of our Nation, and strengthen our leadership in the world. The first budget of the 21st century was a long time in coming, but it goes a very long way toward fulfilling those historic responsibilities.

Though it leaves some challenges unmet, it represents real progress. It is a budget for a Government that lives within its means and lives up to the values of the American people. We value prosperity, and this budget will help to extend it. It maintains the fiscal discipline that has turned deficits into surpluses and gives us what will be in February the longest economic expansion in the history of the United States.

It avoids risky tax cuts that would have spent hundreds of billions of dollars from the Social Security surplus and drained our ability to advance education and other important public purposes.

The budget keeps us on track toward paying down the debt so that in 15 years, our Nation will be debt-free for the first time since 1835. This will mean lower interest rates and greater growth for a whole generation of Americans.

We value education, and this budget truly puts education first, continuing our commitment to hire 100,000 highly-qualified teachers to lower class size in the early grades—which common sense and research both tells us leads to improved learning.

The budget also helps to fulfill another promise I made last winter, to encourage more accountability for results in our Nation's schools. Under this budget, for the first time we will help States and school districts turn around or shut down their worst-performing schools—schools that year after year fail to give our most disadvantaged students