help them build our economic prosperity tomorrow.

The ''Middle-Class Bill of Rights Tax Relief Act of 1995'' includes three of the four elements of my Middle Class Bill of Rights. First, it offers middle-income families a $500 tax credit for each child under 13. Second, it includes a tax deduction of up to $10,000 a year to help middle-income Americans pay for post-secondary education expenses and training expenses. Third, it lets more middle-income Americans make tax-deductible contributions to Individual Retirement Accounts and withdraw from them, penalty-free, for the costs of education and training, health care, first-time home-buying, long periods of unemployment, or the care of an ill parent.

The fourth element of my Middle Class Bill of Rights—not included in this legislation—is the GI Bill for America's Workers, which consolidates 70 Federal training programs and creates a more effective system for learning new skills and finding better jobs for adults and youth. Legislation for this proposal is being developed in cooperation with the Congress.

If enacted, the Middle Class Bill of Rights will help keep the American Dream alive for everyone willing to take responsibility for themselves, their families, and their futures. And it will not burden our children with more debt. In my fiscal 1996 budget, we have found enough savings not only to pay for this tax bill, but also to provide another $81 billion in deficit reduction between 1996 and 2000.

This legislation will restore fairness to our tax system, let middle-income families share in our economic prosperity, encourage Americans to prepare for the future, and help ensure that the United States moves into the 21st Century still the strongest nation in the world. I urge the Congress to take prompt and favorable action on this legislation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *February 13, 1995.*

By unanimous consent, the message, together with the accompanying papers, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 104–34).

¶25.23 MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—WORKING WAGE INCREASE

The SPEAKER pro tempore, Mr. BONILLA, laid before the House a message from the President, which was read as follows:

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit for your immediate consideration and enactment the ''Working Wage Increase Act of 1995.''

This draft bill would amend the Fair Labor Standards Act to increase the minimum wage in two 45 cents steps—from the current rate of $4.25 an hour to $4.70 an hour on July 4, 1995, and to $5.15 an hour after July 3, 1996. The pattern of the proposed increase is identical to that of the last increase, which passed the Congress with a broad bipartisan majority and was signed by President Bush in 1989. The first increment of the proposal simply restores the minimum wage to its real value following the change enacted in 1989.

If the Congress does not act now, the minimum wage will fall to its lowest real level in 40 years. That would dishonor one of the great promises of American life—that everyone who works hard can earn a living wage. More than 11 million workers would benefit under this proposal, and a full-time, year-round worker at the minimum wage would get a $1,800 raise—the equivalent of 7 months of groceries for the average family.

To reform the Nation's welfare system, we should make work pay, and this legislation would help achieve that result. It would offer a raise to families that are working hard, but struggling to make ends meet. Most individuals earning the minimum wage are adults, and the average worker affected by this proposal brings home half of the family's earnings. Numerous empirical studies indicate that an increase in the minimum wage of the magnitude proposed would not have a significant impact on employment. The legislation would ensure that those who work hard and play by the rules can live with the dignity they have earned.

I urge the Congress to take prompt and favorable action on this legislation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *February 13, 1995.*

By unanimous consent, the message, together with the accompanying papers, was referred to the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 104–33).

¶25.24 MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—NEW ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore, Mr. BONILLA, laid before the House a message from the President, which was read as follows:

To the Congress of the United States:

Two years ago I took office determined to improve the lives of average American families. I proposed, and the Congress enacted, a new economic strategy to restore the American dream. Two years later, that strategy has begun to pay off.

Together we have created an environment in which America's private sector has been able to produce more than 5 million new jobs. Manufacturing employment grew during each month of 1994—the first time that has happened since 1978. We have cut the deficit in the Federal budget for 3 years running, we have kept inflation in check, and based on actions I have already taken, the Federal bureaucracy will soon be the smallest it has been in more than 3 decades. We have opened up more new trade opportunities in just 2 years than in any similar period in a generation. And we have embarked on a new partnership with American industry to prepare the American people to compete and win in the new global economy.

In short, America's economic prospects have improved considerably in the last 2 years. And the economy will continue to move forward in 1995, with rising output, falling deficits, and increasing employment. Today there is no country in the world with an economy as strong as ours, as full opportunity, as full of hope.

Still, living standards for many Americans have not improved as the economy has expanded. For the last 15 years, those Americans with the most education and the greatest flexibility to seek new opportunities have seen their incomes grow. But the rest of our work force have seen their incomes either stagnate or fall. An America that, in our finest moments, have always grown together, now grows apart.

I am resolved to keep the American dream alive in this new economy. We must make it possible for the American people to invest in the education of their children and in their own training and skills. This is the essence of the New Covenant I have called for—economic opportunity provided in return for people assuming personal responsibility. This is the commitment my Administration made to the American people 2 years ago, and it remains our commitment to them today.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Our economic strategy has been straightforward. First, we have pursued deficit reduction to increase the share of the Nation's economic resources available for private investment. At the same time we have reoriented the government's public investment portfolio with an eye toward preparing our people and our economy for the 21st century. We have cut yesterday's government to help solve tomorrow's problems, shrinking departments, cutting unnecessary regulations, and ending programs that have outlived their usefulness. We have also worked to expand trade and to boost American sales to foreign markets, so that the American people can enjoy the better jobs and higher wages that should result from their own high-quality, high-productivity labor. Having fixed the fundamentals, we are now proposing what I call the Middle Class Bill of Rights, an effort to build on the progress we have made in controlling the deficit while providing tax relief that is focused on the people who need it most.

PUTTING OUR OWN HOUSE IN ORDER

The first task my Administration faced upon taking office in January 1993 was to put our own economic house in order. For more than a decade, the Federal Government had spent much more than it took in, borrowing the difference. As a consequence, by 1992 the Federal deficit had increased to 4.9 percent of gross domestic product—and our country had gone from being the world's largest creditor Nation to being its largest debtor.