DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING AND THERAPY SYSTEMS—TRADE BALANCE—CALENDAR YEAR 1992—Continued

[In U.S. dollars]

Country	Exports	Percent share	Imports	Percent share	Balance
Japan	264,670,735	13.12	585,495,403	32.97	(320,824,668)
Canada	167,714,703	8.31	22,832,903	1.29	144,881,800
Netherlands	143,067,845	7.09	168,253,096	9.47	(25,185,251)
France	139,053,469	6.89	123,562,901	6.96	15,490,568
United Kingdom	112,547,658	5.58	75,174,628	4.23	37,373,030
Italy	90,432,792	4.48	25,967,958	1.46	84,484,834
Australia	68,713,260	3.41	3,955,211	0.22	64,758,049
China	65,697,608	3.26	230,093	0.01	65,467,515
Brazil	59,351,337	2.94	6,928	0.00	59,344,409
Mexico	58,427,919	2.90	3,873,607	0.22	54,554,312
South Korea	52,492,524	2.60	3,653,817	0.21	48,838,707
Hong Kong	38,993,025	1.93	12,000,784	0.68	26,992,241
Belgium	35,464,619	1.76	22,388,550	1.26	13,076,069
Switzerland	34,039,311	1.69	15,763,755	0.89	18,275,556
Taiwan	29,607,240	1.47	2,268,816	0.13	27,338,424
Spain	29,148,523	1.45	9,970,803	0.56	19,177,720
Sweden	26,178,428	1.50	23,025,472	1.30	5,152,968
Argentina	24,046,114	1.19	10,100	0.00	24,036,014
Austria	20,289,187	1.01	7,862,878	0.44	12,426,309

Data Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

SUNDRY MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sundry messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Mr. Edwin Thomas, one of his secretaries.

□ 1630

THE FAMILIES FIRST AGENDA AND A FURTHER DISCUSSION ON SUPREME COURT JUSTICE CLARENCE THOMAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk today about the families first agenda of the Democrats, recently announced. Of course we have between now and November to really get to understand and fully digest what this agenda is all about, but I am very excited about it because it does crystallize and place in one package some of the very important points that I have been trying to get across for the last 18 months.

I think the families first agenda is a good statement as to what is most important that is going on here in Washington at this point. It talks about what is happening with working families and workers in the workplace and what we need to do to deal with guaranteeing that we place families first by seeing to it that working families have an opportunity to survive with dignity and that people in the workplace have a fair chance to make a living. That is one very important part of it. Another part of the families first agenda, of course, deals with education. Nothing is more important than education at this particular point in the history of this Nation.

We are in a critical transition period. This is a period where high tech know-how has taken over. It is a period where skills that were relevant and useful and could command a great price in the marketplace 30, 40 years ago are no longer able to command that price. For that reason we have a great gap in our income structure, and more and more people are sinking to lower and lower levels in terms of their income while the country is really prospering and a handful of people are getting richer and richer. The families first agenda was developed by the Democratic Caucus under the leadership of Minority Leader GEPHARDT. I think he did a great job, and we certainly would expect from Democrats that kind of agenda.

I want to start by indicating that there is an editorial that appeared in the Atlanta Constitution that was not developed by Democrats, was not developed by the Democratic Caucus. In fact I do not think you could ever accuse the Atlanta Constitution of being a group of wild-eyed liberals. This editorial, I think, could very well be an introduction to the families first agenda. The families first agenda could benefit greatly from this editorial, which is labeled the ''Shrinking Middle Class.'' It appeared in the Atlanta Constitution of Friday, June 21. I am going to talk about this editorial and then move into the families first agenda.

Before I do that, I did want to make a few comments about the topic that I discussed just before we adjourned for the July 4th holiday. I got a lot of comments as a result of my last 60-minute presentation. I talked at that time about another subject which was close to education, educating children. I used the situation with respect to Clarence Thomas, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas who has been the focus of a controversy in Prince George's County. There were some board members of the local school board who objected to Justice Thomas addressing a group of youngsters who were receiving awards.

Prince George's County and this particular school in particular is predominantly black, overwhelmingly black. The board member, Mr. Kenneth Johnson, had raised the issue of considering the kinds of positions that Justice Thomas has taken, which have hurt black people so much, have hurt the African-Americans in this country so very much, should he be allowed to come to a school of predominantly black children and not have a situation where he could be questioned or there could be a discussion. Should he be allowed to come in and serve as a role model without anybody making any effort to see to it that youngsters understand that there is a controversy surrounding Mr. Thomas which definitely impacts on their lives and that you ought to have some different kind of format.

I praised Mr. Johnson's action, and he was not trying to deny Supreme Court Justice Thomas the right to speak. He wanted a different format. I think it was most appropriate.

I got a lot of criticism for that. A lot of people called in. One lady called in teary-eyed, saying that she never thought she would see the day where a black Congressman would sit on the floor of the House and criticize a black Supreme Court Justice. My answer to that is it is very difficult, I assure you, but these are very difficult times. These are very complex times. The world is not simple anymore with respect to civil rights. The fact is that everybody who fought in the civil rights struggle had a common goal and you had clear objectives, people were being denied the right to drink at water fountains. They were being denied hotel accommodations. They were being denied the right to take a job even when they were qualified for the job. They were openly discriminated against.

It was all very obvious, very blatant, and we were all marching to the tune of one drum against these insults and against the disadvantages that they posed. It was much clearer. Now, you have a situation where people who are the beneficiaries of affirmative action, like Supreme Court Justice Thomas, have attacked the same affirmative action that he was a beneficiary of. Supreme Court Justice Thomas has begun to help turn back the clock on many of the progressive steps that were taken and made by African-Americans in this country.

So, if he is handing down decisions which attack the Voting Rights Act, decisions which attack affirmative action, decisions which make new law and that law is very much to the disadvantage and the detriment of black people in general and certainly black

children, then I think Mr. Johnson, the school board member who raised the issue, has a legitimate point. This man should not be held up as a role model without question.

Yes, when I was the age of these school children in the eighth grade, any black who achieved anything was held up as a model. Be somebody was a very general statement. Be somebody, achieve, rise to any level. It did not matter what kind of philosophy you had when you got there; ideology, those things were too complicated. It did not have to be discussed because just about any black who was a role model also was against segregation, they were also against discrimination.

Things were very simple. But when you have a situation as complicated as the kind of decisions that have been handed down by the Supreme Court, certainly the latest set of decisions on the Voting Rights Act and then my last discussion I talked about the Voting Rights Acts decisions. I talked about the attack on affirmative action. I talked about how these kinds of actions on the top are generating a spirit of something to do with the kind of extremism you see acted out at the bottom with the burning of black churches. There is a relationship.

These kinds of actions are radical actions being taken by the Supreme Court. The Voting Rights Act decisions that have been handed down by the Supreme Court, they break with the current law. They break with the trend in law. The break new ground because the general progressive movement forward of American law as interpreted by the Supreme Court has not taken the kind of positions that the Supreme Court now has begun to take. The Supreme Court is using the 14th amendment to justify striking down programs which are very much in step with what the 14th amendment was designed to accomplish.

The Supreme Court leadership, the majority on the Supreme Court have chosen to use the 14th amendment as a battering ram to wipe out any legislation designed to benefit the descendants of African-American slaves. That is a radical departure from the way the law was being interpreted before.

The Supreme Court, this majority on the Supreme Court, joined by Justice Thomas, also refuses to follow a simple procedure that every other Supreme Court and most other courts of law have held up as a very necessary procedure. That is to examine any law or any part of the Constitution and try to determine what the Founding Fathers meant at the time that item was placed in the Constitution or what the Congress meant at the time a law was passed. The intent of Congress, the intent of the Founding Fathers has always been one of the foundations of the analytical process that goes on when the law is deliberated at the level of the courts.

So, the intent of the 14th amendment is very important. The fact that this majority has chosen to totally ignore the intent of the 14th amendment and use it as a battering ram to push a color-blind philosophy, it is an ideology, a color-blind ideology of Sandra Day O'Connor and the other members who join her repeatedly in insisting that the 14th amendment says that we must have a color-blind society, that has no foundation in the 14th amendment. It may be that the general implication of what America is all about and the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, everything says that we should have a color-blind society and that is implied. But the 14th amendment certainly is not the place where you should ground that kind of theory. Just the opposite, when it comes to people who are descendants of African slaves. The slaves were the subject of the 14th amendment. The slaves were the concern of the 14th amendment.

I had to move through this very rapidly last time. So, for the benefit of people who are upset about my argument, I just wanted to repeat it. Again, it relates to education, which I want to talk about later as my primary topic. It relates to the education of our children. Nothing is more important as history and having children understand history in a proper manner. Nothing is more important than having children understand that role models are determined not by people's position in the hierarchy but by what that position means, the philosophy of the ideology, the kind of actions that these people take.

So to take the 14th amendment and twist it and distort it and to have the 14th amendment being used as a justification for wiping out the Voting Rights Act, to have the 14th amendment being used as a justification for getting rid of affirmative action, that is a heinous misuse and abuse of the 14th amendment. The 14th amendment was designed to ameliorate the crimes of slavery. It was designed to make some compensation for what had gone on before the 14th amendment was passed. The 14th amendment came right after the 13th amendment.

Mr. Speaker, the 13th amendment freed the slaves. The 14th amendment dealt with guaranteeing that nobody would misunderstand that these slave persons have equal rights. Not all Americans have equal rights, all other Americans had equal rights. They have always had them under the Constitution. It was a new group of Americans who were being elevated to the point where they, too, would have equal rights. Originally the Constitution spoke of slaves only as three-fifths of a person in the counting of the populations of the States. The Constitution states that the slaves shall be considered three-fifths of a person. Well, the 14th amendment makes it clear that no longer is that true, that each person in the United States, a person shall include slaves, slaves shall be considered as persons. That was the primary thrust of sections 1 and 2 of the 14th amendment.

What you have is the Supreme Court, the majority on the Supreme Court, the Sandra Day O'Connor majority, the Clarence Thomas and Sandra Day O'Connor majority insisting that only one section, in fact, one sentence is relevant. And that is section 1 of the 14th amendment, which talks about all persons born and naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.

Why did the 14th amendment have to say that? It said it already in the Constitution before. Who were they talking about? What were they clarifying? When they say all persons born or naturalized, they mean a new group of people now that must be recognized, those people who had before been considered only three-fifths of a man. They now must be recognized as full citizens of the United States. No States shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of the citizens of the United States, nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

That is the part of the 14th amendment which O'Connor and Thomas and company insist is the basis for the establishment of a color-blind United States of America.

☐ 1645

Well, you did not need to say that people should not be denied equal protection of the law. That was the case for all other people except slaves. Only the newly freed slaves had to be included, and the 14th amendment wanted to make it clear that the newly freed slaves must not be denied equal protection of the laws.

Now that is section 1 of the 14th amendment. What the O'Connor-Thomas majority on the court ignored completely are the following: section 2, section 3, section 4 and section 5.

Section 2 makes it quite clear that this 14th amendment is concerned primarily about slaves. Section 2 talks about Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State. This is section 2 of the 14th amendment.

As I said before, the primary business of the 14th amendment is to rectify, to take care of, the conditions that had been created by slavery and the conditions that the Constitution had recognized.

Why do you have the statement in the section 2 of the 14th amendment which talks about counting the whole number of persons in each State? Because before some persons in each State, those who were slaves, were not counted as a whole number. Three-fifths of a slave was counted as a person for the benefit of taking the census, and the census, of course, determines what the voting power and electoral college would be of each State.

The census would, of course, determine how many Representatives each State would have.

The great compromise was to allow slaves to be counted at all. That is why the three-fifths number was arrived at. Section 2 in the 14th amendment, it goes back to make the correction, and it says you must count the whole number of the persons.

It also went on to say that when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President or Vice President, Representatives, in other words, for any Federal office, when the right for any Federal office is denied or for any State office is denied to these people who now are not going to be counted as three-fifths, but be counted as a whole, you shall have a problem if you deny anybody the right to vote, especially these new slaves, new citizens who were former slaves. You should have a problem, and your proportion in the House of Representatives would be reduced by the number of such male citizens to the male citizens of the total State. You shall have a reduction if you are guilty of denying the right to vote to these citizens.

Why would this be included if you were not talking about a new group of citizens? If it is confusing, I will read the whole thing: But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the executive and judicial officers of a State, or the members of a legislature thereof is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State being 21 years of age and citizens of the United States are in any way abridged except for participation in rebellion or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens 21 years of age in such State. That is section 2 of the 14th amendment.

Notice that they are concerned about denying the right to vote to one group of people, those who participated in rebellion or other crime are denied the right to vote. If you do not understand what that means, go on to read section 3. Section 3 is more concerned about people who participate in rebellion. Again I am reading this only to make the point that the 14th amendment was primarily concerned about the Civil War, the aftermath of the Civil War or the War of the Rebellion, whatever you want to call it, and the conditions of slaves, the freedom of slaves, the recognition of the freedom of slaves, the recognition of full citizenship for slaves, and it also wanted to make it clear that people who had rebelled did not have certain rights.

The part that is totally ignored in the 14th amendment is section 3. No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elected President or Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States or under any State, who have not previously taken an oath as a Member of Congress or as a officer of the United States or as a member of the State legislature or as an executive or judicial officer of any State to support the Constitution of the United States and then shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof; those persons shall not hold office except the last sentence of section 3 of the 14th amendment:

But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each house remove such disability.

This is part of the 14th amendment which Sandra Day O'Connor keeps citing as an amendment to make America colorblind. This is an amendment which dealt with the problems related to slavery and rebellion against the Government of the United States which causes civil war.

And then finally, section 4, the validity of the public debt of the United States authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. This is in the 14th amendment. They are talking about the debts incurred in fighting the Civil War, the pensions owed to soldiers who fought the Civil War, who fought against the rebellion. They are going to clarify that the other side is not included in the next sentence: But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid or insurrection, rebellion against the United States or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave. All such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.

Section 4 of the 14th amendment; if you do not understand before you get to section 4 that the 14th amendment is about slavery, it is about correcting the injustices of slavery. It is about the War of the Rebellion, it is about dealing with people who had rebelled, denying them the right to hold office, making provision for some of them to hold office if the Congress votes by a two-thirds vote, and it is about debts that were incurred in the Civil War, debts that were incurred on the Union side, on the side which upheld the Constitution of the United States, all being made legal and debts that were incurred by the people who were rebelling being made illegal.

It is in the 14th amendment: Neither the United States, nor any State, shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid or insurrection, rebellion against the United States or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave. But all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.

I am not going to go on. I do not want to refight the Civil War. My concern is if you want to deal with a Supreme Court that sits there and interprets the law and ignores more than 75 percent of the 14th amendment to come out with a conclusion based on one sentence in the first, in section 1, and say that that Supreme Court is a legitimate institution, that the majority there is acting in a respectable way, that no one should challenge what they do, that Clarence Thomas is not part of a conspiracy to distort the Constitution, distort the 14th amendment; if you want to take that position, I am trying to tell you you are not on sound ground.

Those of us who challenge the majority in the Supreme Court in their voting rights decision based on the 14th amendment certainly have a legitimate argument. We certainly have a right to challenge Clarence Thomas, Justice Clarence Thomas, on the position that he takes on the voting rights amendment. When you combine that with the position he is taking on affirmative action, we certainly have a right to challenge him to be held up as a role model for black children.

I have taken the time to do this because I got so many inquiries and so many comments on the comments that I made the last time I was here for a special order. I was talking then about how you educate children. I talked about history and how important history is in the education of children. Education is a major part of our families first agenda, and I want to talk now about the families first agenda.

Education, history, math, science, all of it is important. We had a situation where during this 104th Congress an absurd proposal has been made by the majority to abolish the Department of Education. Not only do they come with billions of dollars in cuts for education programs, but they have proposed to totally abolish the Department of Education.

This same majority, the Republican majority, has chosen to wage a relentless war on the working families and workers in their workplace. The kind of antilabor legislation that has been proposed and, in some cases, passed on the floor of this House are indicative of what the other side, the Republican majority, thinks about working families. So the working families first, families first agenda of the Democrats, is an answer, an appropriate answer to the positions that were not stated in the Contract With America, but certainly have been taken de facto by the Republican majority.

We are defending American workers. Families first agenda is a defense of American workers.

I go back to the Atlanta Constitution editorial, which could easily be a good introduction to our Families First agenda. The Atlanta Constitution editorial on June 21 is about the shrinking middle class, and I will read parts of it. It is reporting on the fact that an analysis by statisticians at the U.S. Census Bureau has confirmed and expanded on reports of a growing economic inequality in the United States.

Expressed in stark English, the report says that the rich are getting richer and the rest of America is getting poorer. Now, you have heard that

before, but this comes from the Atlanta Constitution, which is not a New York liberal paper but pretty much respected in circles that criticize us New York liberals.

Continuing to read from editorial: Expressed in numbers the news is no better. Between 1974 and 1994 the share of national income going to the richest 5 percent of American households rose by 33 percent. Meanwhile the share of national income going to the bottom 60 percent fell by 14.3 percent. That trend can be traced back more than 20 years and has seemed to accelerate rather than slow over the past 5 years.

The implications of that ongoing transformation are tremendous and ought to inform public policy on the gamut of social issues from welfare reform to crime, but it does not. For example, we know that education matters over the past 20 years, incomes of those with advanced college degrees have risen while incomes of those with less than a college degree have fallen sharply. Yet the trend in Congress has been to cut financial aid that would make college possible for many poor and middle-class students.

I am continuing to read from the Atlanta Constitution editorial of June 21: We also know that the minimum wage, which sets the floor for workers at the bottom of the economic scale, has failed to keep pace with inflation. The falling real minimum wage in turn contributes to the declining income share of the working poor. Yet Congress continues to balk at raising the minimum wage.

Now, we know now that the Senate is still considering the minimum wage; the other body. We did pass the minimum-wage increase in this House after much hand-wringing and threats. Finally, common sense prevailed. The focus groups told the Republican majority they had to do it. The public opinion polls told the Republican majority that they ought to listen to the public for a change. So we got a bill passed here in this House, but it still faces a difficult time in the Senate.

Returning to the article, the editorial in the Atlanta Constitution: The Census Bureau data also raised a series of fundamental questions that we ought to be asking ourselves. At what level does economic inequity threaten the social stability of our Nation?

□ 1700

''And does the rising crime rate and growing alienation among our young people suggest that we may have already reached that point?''

Let me re-read this. This is a paragraph from the Atlanta Constitution editorial entitled ''Shrinking Middle Class.''

''The Census Bureau data also raises a series of fundamental questions.'' The first question is, ''At what level does economic inequity threaten the social stability of our Nation, and does the rising crime rate and growing alienation among our young people suggest that we may have already reached that point?''

No. 2, ''If falling incomes make it more difficult for young men to raise families, at what point do they begin to abandon the joys and responsibilities of fatherhood? Have we perhaps reached that point already, as evidenced by the rising rate of illegitimate births?''

Point three, ''Does the growing economic strain on the bottom 60 percent of Americans account in some way for the growing anger among many white men, who have been told that their problems are the fault of the Government, of minorities, or of foreign trade?''

The next point, ''At what point does the inequality between rich and poor begin to undermine the democratic character of the United States, a nation that long prided itself on the relative equality of its people as compared with nations in Europe and elsewhere? Today, income inequality in the United States exceeds that of any other industrialized nation.''

''Today, income inequality in the United States exceeds that of any other industrialized nation. Are we still the country we believe ourselves to be? Unfortunately, to even raise such questions is to risk being accused of fomenting class warfare in this country.''

I continue to quote from the Atlanta Constitution editorial. ''Unfortunately, to even raise such questions is to risk being accused of fomenting class warfare in this country. It is a laughable charge. A quiet class war is already underway, and it is being fought largely because of technology. The computer revolution is altering the relationship between human beings and machines. It is making human labor less valuable and machines more valuable. Corporate downsizings and stagnant wages, accompanied by soaring corporate profits and a recordbreaking stock market, are the first visible symptoms of that largely invisible process. It concentrates wealth in the hands of those with money to invest in computer technology, and to a lesser degree, among those with the education to serve or build computers. Meanwhile, it impoverishes those attempting to make their living by their own hard work.

Trying to halt that technological revolution would be futile. We do not have the power. We do have the power, however, to mold and guide technology to ensure that American values and ideals are honored. We also have the power to adjust social policy to economic reality. But we have failed to do so.''

I end the article, the editorial which appeared in the Atlanta Constitution on June 21, 1996. I include the entire editorial into the RECORD.

The material referred to is as follows:

SHRINKING MIDDLE CLASS

An analysis by statisticians at the U.S. Census Bureau has confirmed and expanded on reports of a growing economic inequality in the United States. Expressed in stark English, the report says that the rich are getting richer and the rest of America is getting poorer.

Expressed in numbers, the news is no better. Between 1974 and 1994, the share of national income going to the richest 5 percent of American households rose by 33 percent. Meanwhile, the share of national income going to the bottom 60 percent fell by 14.3 percent.

That trend can be traced back more than 20 years, and has seemed to accelerate, rather than slow, over the past five years. The implications of that ongoing transformation are tremendous and ought to inform public policy on the gamut of social issues, from welfare reform to crime.

But it doesn't. For example, we know that education matters. Over the past 20 years, incomes of those with advanced college degrees have risen, while incomes of those with less than a college degree have fallen sharply. Yet the trend in Congress has been to cut financial aid that would make college possible for many poor and middle-class students.

We also know that the minimum wage—which sets the floor for workers at the bottom of the economic scale—has failed to keep pace with inflation. The falling real minimum wage in turn contribute to the declining income share of the working poor. Yet Congress continues to balk at raising the minimum wage.

The Census Bureau data also raise a series of fundamental questions that we ought to be asking ourselves:

At what level does economic inequity threaten the social stability of our nation, and does the rising crime rate and growing alienation among our young people suggest that we may have already reached that point?

If falling incomes makes it more difficult for young men to raise families, at what point do they begin to abandon the joys and responsibilities of fatherhood? Have we perhaps reached that point already, as evidenced by the rising rate of illegitimate births?

Does the growing economic strain on the bottom 60 percent of Americans account in some way for the growing anger among many white men, who have been told that their problems are the fault of government, minorities and foreign trade?

At what point does the inequality between rich and poor begin to undermine the democratic character of the United States, a nation that long prided itself on the relative equality of its people as compared with nations in Europe and elsewhere? Today, income inequality in the United States exceeds that of any other industrialized nation.

Are we still the country we believe ourselves to be?

Unfortunately, to even raise such questions is to risk being accused of fomenting class warfare in this country. It is a laughable charge. A quiet class war is already under way, and it is being fought largely because of technology. The computer revolution is altering the relationship between human beings and machines. It is making human labor less valuable and machines more valuable.

Corporate downsizings and stagnant wages, accompanied by soaring corporate profits and a record-breaking stock market, are the most visible symptoms of that largely invisible process. It concentrates wealth in the hands of those with the money to invest in computer technology, and to a lesser degree among those with the education to serve or build computers. Meanwhile, it impoverishes those attempting to make their living by their own hard work.

Trying to halt that technological revolution would be futile. We do have the power, however, to mold and guide technology to ensure that American values and ideals are honored. We also have the power to adjust social policy to economic reality. But we have failed to do so.

As I said, this could be an introduction to the Democratic families first agenda. At the heart of the families first agenda is the recognition that we are in a transition period in the American economy: that high technology, the age of the computer, the miniaturization, telecommunications innovations, new innovations every day, internets, the age of information, all of these things are going forward and nobody can stop them. Nobody should try to stop them. What we as Members of Congress and as public policymakers must do is try to understand the hardship that is being created by the majority of the people out here in our own Nation. The majority of the people cannot cope with these changes unless they have some kind of Government policies which recognize the difficulties. The families first agenda recognizes these difficulties.

The families first agenda puts a great deal of emphasis on education. The President's proposals for tuition, for tax deductions for tuition for the first 2 years, $10,000 of tax deductions, puts a great emphasis where it should be, on education. The President's proposals for a $1,500 tax credit puts the emphasis where it should be, on education. The proposal for merit scholarships puts the emphasis where it should be, and that is on education.

Familes first includes these proposals. It is moving definitely in the right direction. Again, I applaud and commend the House Democratic leader, the gentleman from Missouri, Mr. GEPHARDT, for putting together this families first package. I think we cannot say too much about it between now and November to get the American people fully to understand that this is a defining statement, very simply set forth. There are many details that we will add in our individual districts. Certainly in my district, I have a job to do back in the 11th Congressional District in Brooklyn, to make certain people understand what the families first agenda is all about.

They are going to have a chance to have a debate, I understand, because according to the Washington Times of yesterday, Monday, July 8, I have a Republican opponent. She is so invisible that I did not know she existed before I read about her in the Washington Times. I have a Republican opponent, and she is going to join in the debate because she is definitely going to bring the ideas of the Republican majority to the 11th Congressional District.

My district has never had an opportunity to see a real Republican who walked from door to door, as this article says that my opponent was in the housing project at Brownsville, a poor section of my district, a low-income housing project. She was there, going from door to door, telling people that vouchers are a good idea, school vouchers are a good idea. I think they should hear that.

She is one of 24 black Republicans running for Congress this year, so I think these 24 black Republicans, who may be a part of a Clarence Thomas movement all across America, are people who are going to take the position that economic policies and policies related to discrimination and voting rights, all those policies that are being promulgated by the right and are hurting African-Americans directly, that those policies should be promulgated by African-American candidates in African-American communities, in some cases. Certainly my opponent is running in a community which is 74 percent black. It will be a good test to see how many people appreciate these ideas.

My opponent wants to talk about vouchers for private schools. I think people in my district ought to hear it. The low-income people in the projects ought to hear it proposed that the answer to the education problems in our society are vouchers for private schools. She should tell them that if the government provided vouchers, it would be about the amount equivalent to what we provide for title I programs. The only voucher program that has ever been proposed at the Federal Government level takes the title I money and divides it in areas where schools are eligible for title I. That comes out to between $1,000 and $1,500 per child.

So my opponent, the Republican who is going to venture into the low-income housing projects, wants to tell them that "We will give you a voucher of $1,000 or $1,500 so you can send your child to the private school, but you have to get the rest."

That will be interesting to see how rapidly they throw my opponent out of the building, because $1,500 is not going to pay for anybody's private school tuition over a year. Where is the rest of the money going to come from, $3,000, $4,000? My opponent and other Republicans who are going to run in districts like mine should understand that poverty means you do not have any money left over even to have music lessons, even to give your child music lessons. You do not have any money left over if you are living on minimum wage and minimum wage is providing you with an income of $8,400 a year. If a person is on minimum wage and they go to work every day, they make $8,400 a year.

Most jobs are laying off, and for various reasons people do not go to work every day: They get sick, they have various problems. So a person on minimum wage does not even make $8,400 a year. They do not have any money to make up the difference between the voucher and the private school tuition. That is just one example. I think Republicans running in districts like mine will understand a great deal a year from now, between now and November.

But let the issue be joined. Let them come forward and learn about poverty. I think in the process of running for election, if more Republicans learn about poverty, it will mean that in the next Congress, which will probably be controlled, or which undoubtedly will be controlled by the Democratic majority, will have an atmosphere of more informed participants, and we can return to civility and get on with trying to do what is good for the Nation, including what is good for poor people.

The families first agenda starts us down that road. I am going to read the introductory letter of the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT], or portions of his letter, because it is a very good letter:

As Democrats, we have worked to fight the more extreme parts of the Republican agenda during the past year and a half, and we should make no apologies for that role. It was important to defend the interests of average, working families. But we also have an obligation to tell those families what we would do if we are elected this fall—and why their choice of Representative or Senator will have national and not just local consequences.

I am reading from Mr. GEPHARDT's introductory letter about the families first program.

The truth is, we're in a much more competitive global economy. For too many middle-class families, just staying in place means a never-ending scramble of longer hours, second jobs, and credit card debt. Family incomes have been falling for nearly 20 years. Economic pressures are stretching the limits of family and community life. Our country is changing in profound and permanent ways—and too many Americans aren't prepared for that change.

Republicans all but ignored these bread-and-butter, day-to-day concerns. That is why the Families First agenda is comprised entirely of the kinds of changes that affect people's day-to-day lives—in their homes, in their neighborhoods, in their children's schools.

Just as importantly, we do not want to replace the extremism of one party with the extremism of another. Every part of this agenda is modest, moderate, and achievable. It is not about big government handouts. It is merely an attempt to have more families earn more security for themselves in this tough new economy. Our hope is that, in the end, many moderate Republicans will join us in support of the Families First agenda.

The message is simple: If Democrats are given a chance to lead the Congress this fall, our sole and central mission would be to help those families who are working hard to pay the bills, raise their children, and save for a decent retirement. That is the only way to have a Congress that truly puts families first and special interests last. I urge you to join in the effort to share this Families First agenda with the American people, and look forward to working with you on winning a Democratic majority to make a real difference in the lives of working families across America.

Mr. Speaker, I include in its entirety the letter of June 24, 1996, of the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. GEPHARDT] to his fellow Democrats.

The material referred to is as follows:

FAMILIES FIRST,

June 24, 1996.

DEAR FELLOW DEMOCRAT: On Sunday, Tom Daschle and I joined with Democrats at four

satellite sites across the country to announce the Families First Agenda—an action plan developed by House and Senate Democrats working together on the steps that a new Democratic majority would take to improve the lives of hard-working, middle class families.

As Democrats, we have worked to fight the more extreme parts of the Republican agenda during the past year and a half, and we should make no apologies for that role. It was important to defend the interests of average, working families. But we also have an obligation to tell those families what we would do if we are elected this fall—and why their choice of Representative or Senator will have national, not just local, consequences.

The truth is, we're in a much more competitive global economy. For too many middle class families, just staying in place means a never-ending scramble of longer hours, second jobs, and credit card debt. Family incomes have been falling for nearly twenty years. Economic pressures are stretching the limits of family and community life. Our country is changing in profound and permanent ways—and too many Americans aren't prepared for that change.

Republicans all but ignored these bread-and-butter, day-to-day concerns. That is why the Families First Agenda is comprised entirely of the kinds of changes that affect people's day-to-day lives—in their homes, in their neighborhoods, in their children's schools.

Just as importantly, we do not want to replace the extremism of one party with the extremism of another. Every part of this agenda is modest, moderate, and achievable. It is not about big government hand-outs. It is merely an attempt to help families earn more security for themselves in this tough new economy. Our hope is that, in the end, many moderate Republicans will join us in supporting the Families First Agenda.

The message is simple: if Democrats are given a chance to lead the Congress this fall, our sole and central mission would be to help those families who are working hard to pay the bills, raise their children, and save for a decent retirement. That is the only way to have a Congress that truly puts families first, and special interests last. I urge you to join in the effort to share this Families First Agenda with the American people, and look forward to working with you on winning a Democratic majority to make a real difference in the lives of working families across America.

Yours very truly,

RICHARD A. GEPHARDT,
House Democratic Leader.

Mr. Speaker, the families first agenda has many parts. I will just summarize those parts. In the families first agenda, Democrats offer realistic, moderate, and achievable ways to help every struggling family. They an be described in terms of three main principles: security, opportunity, and responsibility.

Security. Under security we have paycheck security, helping families get the paycheck they deserve; health care security, expanding access to quality health care for children; retirement security, making pensions more available and portable; personal security, making our neighborhoods, communities, and schools safer places to live, work, and learn.

Opportunity is the second big category. Educational opportunity, making college and vocational schools tax deductible, and other ways to make it easier for parents to make sure their kids get better paying jobs. Economic opportunity means helping small businesses to prosper. The third category is responsibility: Government responsibility, balancing the Federal budget while protecting fundamental commitments like Medicare; individual responsibility, real welfare reform and a crackdown on parents who will not support their children, and efforts to prevent teen pregnancies; corporate responsibility, hands off employee pensions, end tax breaks that encourage companies to move American jobs overseas, and basic protection for our environment.

I am just going to talk today in the few minutes I have remaining about paycheck security and educational opportunity and economic opportunity. The families first agenda places a great deal of emphasis on what is most important first, and that is paycheck security. Paycheck security starts with a decent minimum wage. You have to have some rewards that are relevant. For people who go to work every day, to make $4.25 an hour, $8,400 a year, is not rewarding work. It does not encourage people to work. It does not say that we care about families. So paycheck security must first of all involve raising the minimum wage.

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Paycheck security also provides paying women what they deserve. By better enforcing the laws already on the books requiring equal pay for women and by offering voluntary fair pay guidelines for businesses, we can help make sure that women get the pay they deserve.

Paycheck security involves making quality child care more affordable. Families should not have to cut corners on child care. But with quality care priced at thousands of dollars a year, many families have no choice. That is why Democrats are proposing a bigger tax break to help parents afford quality child care. I think even the people from one end of my district to the other, people in low-income housing projects, people who are lucky enough to live in single-family homes in the wealthier part of my district, they all will quickly understand that child care and paying for child care imposes a particular burden on parents and that there should be more relief for parents who have children who need child care.

Finally, banning imports made with child labor. In order for our workers at the lowest levels to have jobs available, they should not have to compete with imports that are made with child labor in other parts of the globe.

So paycheck security, starting with minimum wage, is very important. Paycheck security also means that in the workplace, there ought to be a friendly atmosphere. In the workplace there ought to be safe conditions. I serve on the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities so I am very close to some things that have occurred this year which are most unsettling.

The fact is that the Contract With America that was proposed by the Republican majority before they got elected had nothing to do with attacking working conditions for workers in America. There were no platforms in there, there were no items which talked about waging war on workers. But what has happened over the past 18 months is that war has been declared on working people in the workplace. Indirectly that means that war has been declared on working families.

As I said before, you declare war when you refuse to pass the minimum wage, and even now the Senate balks at passing the minimum wage. You declare war on workers when you come up with the omnibus appropriations bill that the Republicans came up with where they threatened to make drastic cuts in the labor programs. There was a 30-percent cut in the House bill originally for the National Labor Relations Board. The National Labor Relations Board is the cornerstone for the kind of relationship that we have established in this country between labor and management. Unions do not mean very much if you do not have decent decisions being passed down by the National Labor Relations Board and if you are going to cut the budget by 30 percent, it means that you are on the way to trying to completely wipe out that National Labor Relations Board and its effectiveness. That cut did not go through. We fought it. So we brought it to a standstill. The act cuts the funding still but it does not cut it by that much.

We were also successful in addressing the attempt to defund large parts of OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Agency. We forced them to allow certain things to continue, such as the continued work on developing standards for ergonomics. But new regulations were still prohibited by this Congress. Every worker, regardless of whether he belongs to a union or not, benefits from the work of OSHA. Yet this Republican majority attacked the work of OSHA.

I think the most important thing that is underway right now is the present attack by the Republican majority on the overtime of workers. Your overtime pay now is jeopardized. They are coming for your overtime pay. The Republicans want the overtime pay of working Americans. They have something called the Working Families Flexibility Act and we fought hard to stop it but we were not able to prevent the passage of this compensatory time bill in the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities. I serve on the Committee. It was painful to watch the hand go out reaching for the overtime of American workers.

Again, you do not understand poor people if you want to say to them that

''you work overtime and we're not going to give you cash, we're going to give you an opportunity to take time off and aren't you happy about that?''

Yes, we need to change our Fair Labor Standards Act to some degree to allow for some categories of people to have that kind of flexibility, but this kind of assault on the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, which did not include any protections, employers could go bankrupt and walk away with your compensatory time and you could not get it, employers could coerce people and say, ''I'm not paying you in cash. You don't have a choice. I'm going to give you time off instead.''

The overtime pay that workers earn in American is very important to the quality of life of families, and when the Republicans say, ''We are coming for your overtime,'' it is just one more assault on working families, one more reason for this families first agenda.

The Davis-Bacon confrontation continues. They are trying to take away the Davis-Bacon protections, which only seek to guarantee that from one area of the country to another you do not undercut and erode the standard of living and the wages of workers by bringing in big Federal projects and having them go to low-bidding, roaming, renegade contractors who move about the country with low-paid workers under terrible conditions, who provide no health insurance, who provide no pension plans, who do not have decent working conditions, and you let them undercut the construction workers in the local areas.

So the families first agenda is a defense of workers agenda. We are defending them from the onslaught of the Republican majority here in the Congress.

The educational opportunities part of the Agenda is also a defense of an attack on educational opportunities. This Republican majority started the year by proposing that we abolish the Department of Education. No other industrialized nation in the world has proposed to run away from and abandon its responsibilities to provide some kind of centralized coordination of education.

Every other nation understands how important education is in its prosperity, in maintaining its standard of living and its place and position in the global economy as well as its position of leadership. Some nations understand very well that if you invest very heavily in education, you can take certain segments of the global economy.

I do not think it is by accident that Bangalore, India, is one of the places which is highlighted for computer programming technology. Companies from all over the world reach into Bangalore, India, to get computer programmers. For 1 month's wages that United States companies pay here to computer programmers, they can get a whole year's worth of work from an Indian computer programmer in Bangalore. It is not by accident that in Bangalore somebody has provided the education for large numbers of people, somebody has chosen to specialize and to make that a human resource that all the world wants to reach into.

We should understand that the future of the country is not bound up in our F–22 fighter planes, the future of the country will not be guaranteed by a new Star Wars system, the future of the country has nothing to do with more Seawolf submarines. We have added $13 billion to the defense budget, and that will buy us no more education. It will buy us weapons systems that will be obsolete in terms of the kinds of challenges that we are going to face. The global economy is not about who has the best weapons. We are way ahead of everybody else. We are likely to stay ahead of everybody else. What we need is education.

In the housing projects of Brownsville, the people are very concerned about education. My opponent who is going from door to door ought to tell them about the $10,000 tax deduction that is being proposed by the Democrats. The Democratic President is proposing a $10,000 tax deduction for college and job training. Under this provision, families will be able to deduct up to $10,000 from their taxes for tuition at a college, graduate school or certified training or technical program. I want to emphasize that, a certified training or technical program will also be included for a 2-year period.

The deduction will also be available to recent graduates paying off interest on student loans. There are many families in poor communities who have one member who has gone to college who is struggling to pay back that loan or one member who is in college who is being hit with tuition increases. In the City College of New York City, in the State College of New York State, increases in tuition have resulted in thousands of students dropping out of school because they are poor. When you are poor, there is no margin. They were struggling to meet the previous tuition. If you raise it by $500 or $700, then you wipe out the opportunity, because they do not have any savings, they do not have any margin. They are living at a point where providing daily necessities is all their income will provide.

My Republican opponent will learn this if she will just stay there and listen long enough. We also have 2 years of college for kids with good grades, some merit scholarships.

Finally, economic opportunity is on the agenda. Nobody wants to back away from providing small businesses with new opportunities and greater help for small businesses. I think small entrepreneurs ought to be included under the National Labor Relations Act. Some way should be developed to help small entrepreneurs in the process of dealing with larger corporations and dealing with working conditions that, because they are small and because they are not united, invite exploitation.

People who learn how to operate computers, people who are able to program computers, people who are able to enter the high tech world of telecommunications also need some protection. They need some help. I would go beyond the Democratic agenda and make certain that they get the kind of help that is needed in meeting the kind of intense and hostile competition that comes from large corporations trying to bargain them into bargain situations.

We have a situation right now where the sweat shops are being highlighted because sweat shops are forced by a bidding process to go for the cheapest possible work setup. They are exploiting workers, and that has become a scandal that has been temporarily exposed. We hope that some good will come out of the present exposure, but that kind of situation is a continuing problem for small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by saying that we will come back to explore the Families First Agenda. The Families First Agenda is a packaging which really concretizes what the Democratic minority has been trying to do all year long.

We have fought the hostile attacks on the American workers and the work force. We have fought for better working conditions for workers. We have fought for families to have a chance to survive. We have fought for the minimum wage. We continue to fight for aid to students in college. We fought for aid for Head Start students. We fought the Republicans on the cuts in title I.

Our Families First package is only a statement that we will continue to be the champions of American working families. We will defend workers, we will defend families, and in the process we will defend the conditions which will help to make this Nation a great Nation. The transition we are in, the transition which leads to a great income gap between the rich and poor, the suffering that is taking place quietly out there is people try to make ends meet, all of it is relevant to the coming election, all of it is relevant to the things that we as Members of Congress and other elected officials are responsible for. We want to make America great and the only way to make America great is to follow the leadership of the Democrats and put families first.

CLINTON ADMINISTRATION SHELVES RULES ON HEALTH MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. HORN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I was shocked when I read in yesterday's Long Beach Press Telegram an article that originated in the New York Times concerning the administration's shelving of rules as they concern HMO's, health maintenance organizations. For