

against tyranny, and secured our freedom and our prosperity.

Above all, let's not forget that these efforts begin and end with the American people. Every time we reduce the threat that has hung over our heads since the dawn of the nuclear age, we help to ensure that from the far stretches of the Aleutians to the tip of the Florida Keys, the American people are more secure. That is our most serious task and our most solemn obli-

gation. The challenge of this moment is matched only by its possibility. So let us do our duty.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Tricia Nixon Cox, daughter of former President Richard Nixon; John Taylor, Director, Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace; and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

Remarks on Senate Action on the Balanced Budget Amendment

March 2, 1995

Good afternoon. I have a statement I'd like to make about the vote on the balanced budget amendment and what happens now. And I look forward to taking your questions tomorrow. We're going to have a press conference then, and so I'll just read the statement now.

The balanced budget amendment has been defeated because Republicans could not provide enough Democratic Senators with the simple guarantee that Social Security would be protected in any balanced budget amendment procedures.

Let me begin by simply congratulating the people on both sides of this issue who argued with great depth of conviction and sincerity and people on both sides who want to bring down the deficit and eliminate unnecessary spending but who differed on the consequences and the necessity of using an amendment to the Constitution to do it.

The question we must all face now is, what happens tomorrow? We all know that there is no real requirement of a constitutional amendment to reduce unnecessary Government spending and to reduce the deficit. For 12 years before I took office, Washington allowed the deficit to explode. Organized interests did well, but the public interest and the future suffered. Washington, during this entire period, spent too much time on rhetoric and gimmicks and too little time making hard, smart, specific budgetary decisions.

Then, just 2 years ago, Democrats acting alone had the courage to pass the largest deficit reduction package in the history of the United States, now over \$600 billion. Our annual deficit

at that time was about 5 percent of our income. It has now dropped to just over half that and is scheduled to go down much lower.

A month ago, we added to that historic deficit reduction with a budget that cuts spending, cuts the deficit even more, and provides for modest tax cuts to the middle class for education and childrearing. I am as ready as ever to work with the Congress to make further reductions in the deficit. As I have said repeatedly, it must come in the context of responsible health care reform because it is only the health care costs of the country that are going up in our budget. All other costs are flat or declining.

Now the process of reducing the deficit while investing in our future must go forward. There is a legal process for doing just that. In 1993, though I had never before been a part of Government in Washington, we presented our budget plan only 27 days into our administration. It has now been 57 days since the Republicans took control of the Congress. And even though their leadership has been here many, many more years, they have still not presented their budget. We passed the budget resolution for our plan before the legal deadline of April 15th. Now they must follow that process as well, telling the American people how they are going to keep the promises of their contract on balancing the budget and paying for their tax cuts by the legal deadline of April 15th.

When the Republicans do present their budget plan, we will carefully consider it. We owe them that, and we must. I have shown my commitment to reducing the deficit and to investing in our future. And I will continue to do that.

I believe we can reduce the deficit without compromising our commitment to education and to our children and without undermining our commitment to our seniors in Social Security and basic Medicare needs. I believe we can do that. I believe we can do it while continuing our commitment to provide 100,000 police officers for this country, a program that is already fully paid for by spending cuts. We do not need to allow any of those things to be used as a bank to cut taxes for upper income Americans.

There are other things we can do right now, things that I agree with the Republican leadership on, and let me just close with this one.

Let us now immediately take up in the Senate the line-item veto, and let's pass it. We can cut millions, tens of millions, hundreds of millions of dollars in spending with the line-item veto. So I urge the Senate to proceed immediately to take that up. And I will work as hard as I can to persuade members of both parties to support it and to continue the important work of reducing the deficit.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:17 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Child Support Enforcement

March 2, 1995

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to reiterate my firm belief that Congress must pass tough child support enforcement measures as part of welfare reform. When absent parents don't provide support, the inevitable result is more welfare, more poverty, and more difficult times for our children. It is essential that all Americans understand that if they parent a child, they will be held responsible for nurturing and providing for that child.

I am doing everything in my power to crack down on child support enforcement. In 1993, we collected a record \$9 billion in child support—a 12 percent increase over the previous year. Last week, I signed an Executive Order to ensure that federal employees who owe child support live up to their responsibilities as parents, and that the federal government will do its utmost to help find parents with delinquent child support claims. Our welfare reform plan included the toughest child support measures ever proposed. If absent parents aren't paying child support, we will garnish their wages, suspend their licenses, track them across state lines, and if necessary, make them work off what they owe.

Parental responsibility should not become a partisan issue. At the bipartisan national Working Session on Welfare Reform that I hosted at Blair House, Republican and Democratic leaders from around the country and every level of government agreed that we should enact the

toughest child support enforcement measures possible.

I hope the committee will not shy away from its responsibilities on this issue. A number of bills similar to our plan could serve as the foundation for any effort to reform child support—including the one offered by Representatives Barbara Kennelly, Nancy Johnson, and others. Critical elements include denying welfare benefits to any unwed mother who does not cooperate fully in identifying the father, powerful measures for tracking interstate cases, and serious penalties—including license suspension, and if necessary, requiring work—for parents who refuse to pay what they owe. We must also include both the performance incentives and resources states need to do the job right.

It is time to get serious about child support in this country. I look forward to working with Congress to get it done.

With best wishes,
Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Bill Archer, chairman, and Sam Gibbons, ranking member, House Committee on Ways and Means. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter. The Executive order of February 27 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.