

tough and specific cuts in spending and ensures that those cuts will be carried out by imposing strict limits on the amounts Congress can spend each year. It ends hundreds of wasteful Government programs and projects, eliminates \$34 billion in corporate subsidies businesses don't need, and makes reforms in entitlement programs so they'll cost less in the future, extending the life of the Medicare Trust Fund for a decade while preserving quality health care for elderly Americans.

Even as the plan balances the budget, it also maintains the balance of our values. To prepare our people for the 21st century, I have challenged our Nation to build the world's best educational system. My plan increases investment in education and training to \$51 billion in 1998, a 20 percent increase. It provides tax cuts to help families pay for college, increases Pell grant scholarships for deserving students, advances the America Reads initiative to help every 8-year-old read on his or her own, and advances our goal of connecting every single classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000. It invests in our people in other ways as well, giving them tax cuts to help them raise their children or buy a home, extending health care coverage to 5 million more children, protecting the environment.

That is the right way to balance the budget. And balancing the budget only requires Congress' vote and my signature; it does not require us to rewrite our Constitution. We must balance

the budget, but a balanced budget amendment could cause more harm than good. It would prevent us from responding to foreign challenges abroad or economic trouble at home, if to do so resulted in even a minor budget deficit. And because it would write a specific economic policy into our Constitution, it could force the Secretary of the Treasury to cut Social Security, or drive the budget into courts of law when a deficit occurred when Congress was not working on the budget. In a court of law, judges could be forced to halt Social Security checks or to raise taxes just to meet the demands of the constitutional amendment.

These are results no one wants to see happen, but a balanced budget amendment could surely produce them. Instead, we should simply act this year and act together, for Democrats and Republicans have an historic opportunity to reach across party lines to enact the first balanced budget in a generation. Soon we will begin discussions with bipartisan leaders in Congress to craft a final plan. By coming to an agreement this year, we can take a giant step to prepare our country for the 21st century and give our children the future they deserve.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:17 p.m. on February 21 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 22.

Statement on the Death of Albert Shanker *February 22, 1997*

Hillary and I were deeply saddened today to learn of the passing of Albert Shanker. Al spent his life in pursuit of one of the noblest of causes, the improvement of our public schools. Since 1964, he led educational organizations, first as the president of the United Federation of Teachers in New York and for 22 years as the president of the American Federation of Teachers. He challenged the country's teachers

and schools to provide our children with the very best education possible and made a crusade out of the need for educational standards. He believed, as I do, that children should not go through school without learning the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Eadie, and his family tonight.

Remarks to the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education

February 24, 1997

Thank you very much. Good morning. Welcome to the White House. Dr. Ponder, Dr. Wilson, Dr. Shaw. Where's Bill Gray? Is he here? You're hiding your light under a bushel back there. [Laughter] I wanted to say again to all of you how grateful I am to Bill Gray for the historic role that he assumed in restoring democracy to Haiti. We've got another year behind us now, Bill, and we're still going. Thank you. Dr. Payne and Dr. Hackley, Mr. Secretary. I'd also like to thank Catherine LeBlanc for her work on the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Welcome to the White House. I'm especially glad you could join us during Black History Month as we pay tribute to the contributions of African-Americans to American life. None of those has been more important than our Nation's historically black colleges and universities. When the doors of college were closed to all but white students and black people's aspirations were scorned, historically black colleges and universities gave young African-Americans the high quality education they deserved, the pride they needed to rise above cruelty and bigotry, as the graduates and teachers of HBCU's haven't just taken care of themselves, they fought for freedom and equal opportunity for all other Americans as well. This has been important throughout our history, and in the future it will be more important than ever before, because education will be more important than ever before. To prepare our people for the new century, every young American must have the world's best education.

You know better than anyone how much a difference an education can make. To name just a few of the young Americans who were educated at HBCU's, you'd have to look at Justice Marshall, Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, Reverend Jesse Jackson, NAACP President Kweisi Mfume, Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison, and of course Dr. King. Eighty-five percent of our Nation's black physicians, 80 percent of our African-American Federal judges, 75 percent of our black Ph.D.'s, 50 percent of our black business executives and elected officials all were educated at HBCU's.

Historically black colleges and universities have served with distinction, of course, in terms of their contributions to our administration: our former Secretary of Energy, Hazel O'Leary; former Surgeon General, Dr. Joycelyn Elders; the Director of Presidential Personnel, Bob Nash; and, of course, as the Vice President said, Alexis Herman, who is here with us today and who did a superb job for us as Director of Public Liaison and, with your help, will be a great Secretary of Labor, and I want your help. [Applause] Thank you.

Over the last 4 years, we have put in place a comprehensive college opportunity strategy to make college available to every American citizen. I directed the Department of Education and the White House initiative on historical colleges to work to increase funding to HBCU's. We've made student loans less expensive and much easier to obtain under the direct student loan program. AmeriCorps, our national service program, has given tens of thousands of young people the chance to earn college tuition while serving in their communities. We have created already in the last budget 200,000 more work-study positions to help students work their way through college, and in the new budget there is another 100,000, which will mean we will go from 700,000 to one million work-study slots in only 4 years.

We know that financial aid is critically important. But some of your colleges, as many as 90 percent of the students receive financial aid. Last year we increased the Pell grant program by 20 percent, taking the maximum grant up to \$2,700 from about, wherever it was, \$2,460. That was the biggest increase in 20 years.

This year's budget is bigger still. It increases Pell grants by another 25 percent, the largest increase again in well over 20 years, and increases the maximum Pell grant award to \$3,000 per year. It expands the program to include older students who are starting college late or returning to school. It raises the maximum family income level to include hundreds of thousands of families who did not qualify for Pell grants before. In total, these changes will help almost 350,000 more families send a family