

June 5 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

Washington is seeing its first surplus in almost 30 years and spending as a share of the economy is at its lowest level in a quarter century, this budget is not the right approach. As Congress

readies its final budget, I urge Members to continue our strategy of fiscal discipline and strategic investments to prepare our country for the 21st century.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Agricultural Research Legislation

June 5, 1998

I commend the House of Representatives for joining the Senate in passing by an overwhelming majority the bipartisan agriculture research bill. This legislation restores benefits to thousands of deserving legal immigrants who will now be able to rely on much-needed food stamp assistance. It builds on our success last year in reversing harsh cuts in SSI and Medicaid benefits for legal immigrants that had nothing to do with our goal of moving people from welfare to work. With these actions, the Congress has gone a long way toward fulfilling the commitment I made to reverse this unfair treatment of legal immigrants. At the same time, the bill

funds crucial agricultural research, crop insurance, and rural development priorities which will strengthen the farm safety net and enhance the quality of life in rural America.

I would like to congratulate Representatives Smith and Stenholm for their excellent work in crafting and stewarding through the House this important legislation.

NOTE: In his statement, the President referred to Robert F. Smith, chairman, and Charles W. Stenholm, ranking minority member, House Committee on Agriculture.

The President's Radio Address

June 6, 1998

Good morning. Before I begin today's address, I want to speak very briefly about the most important issue before the Congress right now, one that affects our children most of all: the tobacco bill.

This is a critical moment of truth for Congress. Senator McCain and Senator Hollings and others have brought to the floor a landmark proposal to protect our children from tobacco. There's broad consensus for this bill. It's reasonable, bipartisan, in the best interest of our children. But for weeks now the Senate hasn't acted, as a few Members have done everything they could to protect big tobacco by putting off a vote.

Today I say to them: The delay has gone on long enough. You are not just trying to kill the tobacco bill; you are standing in the way of saving 1 million children's lives. The American people will not stand for it. The Senate

should do nothing else until it passes tobacco legislation, and it should pass it this week.

Thirty years ago, like millions of young Americans, I scaled the heights of hope with Robert F. Kennedy in his campaign for President. I watched intently in the last days before my graduation from college as he took his case to the American people, confronting new challenges, posing new questions, reaching across the racial divide, and reaching out to the forgotten Americans. Thirty years ago today I, like so many others around the world, felt pain, despair, a sense of deeply personal loss, and a sense of loss for my country that our troubled land had been denied a leader who could bind us together, change course, and move us forward.

Today I'm pleased to be speaking to you from the home of Congressman Joe Kennedy in Massachusetts, where Hillary and I have gathered with Mrs. Kennedy and her children, Senator

Edward Kennedy, and other members of the Kennedy family to observe this day. Robert Kennedy would wish us not to dwell upon his loss but to celebrate his life and carry on his legacy. In his all too short life, he lost much, but he never lost faith. In suffering, he struggled to find wisdom.

On the night our Nation lost Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy appeared before a shocked and grieving crowd in Indianapolis. The night was cold; the moment, tense. Hunched in a black overcoat, he stood before the crowd and said, "Let us dedicate ourselves to what the Greeks wrote so many years ago, 'to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world.'"

Like Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy dedicated himself to that, and his life enriched and ennobled our Nation. Robert Kennedy ran for President, he said, to close the gaps between black and white, between rich and poor, between old and young. In a time of division, more than any American, he bridged those gaps, reaching out to starving families in the Mississippi Delta and to factory workers in Chicago, to migrant workers in Northern California and struggling teens in Harlem. He touched their lives and, just as important, they touched his.

He changed and grew as a result, becoming a fuller person and a better, wiser leader. In changing times, Robert Kennedy was one of the first to see that old solutions did not always fit new challenges, either at home or abroad. We can do better, he so often said, and he pushed his Government and himself to do no

less. To him, in a time of change, labels like "left" and "right" meant little. Dogmas that kept us from moving forward were to be discarded. But he did not discard his passionate convictions or his steely determination to act on them. They infused his public service and his last campaign with a power and purpose we can still feel today.

Yes, Robert Kennedy's legacy is alive today in the work of his family in public service, in the work of those of us he inspired, in the hearts of his fellow Americans. The distance of three decades cannot silence the strength of his words or lessen the impact of his actions. We still hear his voice appealing to the best qualities of the American spirit. We still strive to answer his insistent challenge to do good and to do better.

And on this day of reflection, when the thoughts of all Americans are with his large and loving family, we can do the memory of Robert Kennedy no greater honor than to dedicate ourselves as he did, to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:45 p.m. on June 5 at a private residence in Boston, MA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 5, but the first three paragraphs were embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on June 6. The remainder of the transcript was made available for immediate release on June 5.

Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem in New York City

June 8, 1998

Mr. Secretary-General, President Udovenko, Executive Director Arlacchi, distinguished fellow leaders: Today we join at this Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly to make common cause against the common threat of worldwide drug trafficking and abuse.

Let me begin by thanking my friend President Zedillo for his vision in making this session possible and for his courageous resolve against drugs. And I thank all the nations represented

here who are committed to fight for our children's future by fighting drugs together.

Ten years ago, the United Nations adopted a pathbreaking convention to spur cooperation against drug trafficking. Today, the potential for that kind of cooperation has never been greater or more needed. As divisive blocs and barriers have been dismantled around the world, as technology has advanced and democracy has spread, our people benefit more and more from nations