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country. And most of you are completely immersed in the future and imagining all these possibilities. And so am I.

But when the last longest economic expansion occurred in the 1960's, I can tell you—I graduated from high school in 1964—we thought it would go on forever, and we thought it was on automatic. We thought—we had low inflation. We had low unemployment. We had high growth. We had a civil rights challenge, but we thought it would be solved in the Congress and the courts, not in the street. We thought we would win the cold war because of our innate and self-evident superiority and never dreamed the country would be divided over Vietnam. We thought it would just happen—1964, when I finished high school.

Within 2 years, there were riots in the streets over civil rights. Within 4 years, when I graduated from college, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson couldn't run for reelection because the country was split right down the middle over the war in Vietnam.

A couple months later, President Nixon was elected on a campaign of representing the Silent Majority, which means if you weren't for him, you were in the loud minority, beginning the construct we saw all the way through the 1980's, right to the '92 election, to the '96 election; that you will see in 2000, where the other party tries to divide the American people between "us" versus "them." And I'm supposed to be one of "them" because I believe things like we shouldn't discriminate against gay people, if they're good, God-fearing, taxpaying citizens and they show up and do their duty. I'm for hate crimes legislation. I'm for the employment nondiscrimination legislation. So that makes me one of "them" instead of one of "us"? I don't think so.

But that was the portrait of what happened between 1964 and 1968. And within 4 months after that, the longest expansion in American history was history.

And what I want you to know, you young people here, is, I have waited for 35 years for my country to have the chance to build the future of our dreams for our children. And I am determined to see the politics of America focused on, how can we make the most of the sequencing of the human genome? How can we build a different energy future? How can we bring economic opportunity to the people and places that have been left behind? How can we be a force for peace and prosperity and unity in troubled places around the world? How can we build one America? That's what I think politics is about.

If somebody asks you tomorrow morning why you were here tonight, I hope you'll give them that answer. This is the best chance you will ever have to build the future of your dreams for your children.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mark Fox and Jeffrey Arnold, dinner co-hosts; musician Luther Vandross; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; and Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City.

Memorandum on Census 2000

March 31, 2000

Memorandum for All Federal Government Employees

Subject: Census 2000

We as a Nation are participating now in the largest peacetime mobilization in our history. I refer to Census 2000, the twenty-first census we have conducted in this country.

The decennial census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution, and responding to it is a civic responsibility for everyone living in this country. It is a truly universal activity that we can participate in, and full participation is important to the success and progress of every community.

The data collected will determine how more than $185 billion annually in public funds are shared fairly among the Nation's communities.

The data provide the basis for planning and implementing thousands of laws and programs at every level of Government. The census numbers also are used to decide now many seats each State is allocated in the House of Representatives and to equitably draw voting districts at the State and local level.

Census 2000 is an event that offers us an opportunity to engage the spirit of civic participation that is so important to our representative democracy. The census is important to you and your family. It is important to your community. It is important to our Nation. It is in this spirit that I urge all Federal employees to complete their census forms.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on Extension of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act

March 31, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker:

While the U.S. economy is the strongest it has ever been and inflation and unemployment remain at historically low levels, high oil prices have caused concern for many Americans. As a short-term measure, my Administration urged oil-producing nations to take steps to narrow the gap between worldwide production and consumption of crude oil in order to preserve sustained worldwide economic growth. Our focused diplomatic efforts helped produce tangible commitments by oil-producing nations to increase production to more appropriate levels that reflect current demand in the global economy.

While my Administration has worked hard to increase the supply of oil on the market, the House has failed to take one of the most critical steps necessary to maintain America's energy security—an extension of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA), which includes authority to operate the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), authority that expires today. The option to use the SPR is an essential line of defense against an interruption in oil supplies. Although the Senate passed a four-year straight reauthorization of EPCA, the House has failed to act. It is critical that the House reauthorize EPCA immediately to ensure that the United States maintains its ability to use all available tools to respond to the needs of the U.S. economy.

In addition, Congress should address other energy measures. Congress should pass my comprehensive tax package, which includes new tax incentives for domestic oil producers to reduce U.S. reliance on oil imports, as well as other incentives to promote energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy that Congress has failed to enact. Congress should also fully fund the more than $1.4 billion that I have requested in my fiscal year 2001 Budget and 2000 Supplemental to promote energy security through the use of domestic energy technologies, including more efficient homes and buildings, a new generation of more efficient vehicles, renewable energy sources, and natural gas.

Finally, I have proposed the establishment of a regional home heating oil reserve in the Northeast to reduce the likelihood of future heating oil shortages. Congress should authorize a reserve with an appropriate trigger to release heating oil to the market in the event of a supply shortage. I have directed the Department of Energy to begin the appropriate environmental reviews of the proposal to determine the correct approach to creating this reserve.

These critical steps will strengthen the sound, comprehensive energy strategy that has helped sustain the longest economic expansion in American history. They will enhance America's energy security, create jobs, protect the environment, and produce long-term savings for consumers. Congress should waste no more time in enacting these measures into law.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 1. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.