

I sent Congress a plan to balance the budget, and I submitted a balanced budget plan again a few weeks ago.

The constitutional amendment could have caused or worsened recessions, permitted a minority of legislators to hold the Nation's creditworthiness hostage, involved unelected judges in spending and tax policy, and threatened Social Security and other vital benefits.

Now that the amendment vote has taken place, I call on Congress to join me in passing a plan to balance the budget by 2002 while protecting our values, strengthening education, and providing targeted tax relief to working families.

At the end of Congress' last session, we saw several instances of productive bipartisan cooperation. I hope that we can continue this spirit of bipartisanship and make progress for the American people by reaching agreement on a balanced budget plan this year. All it takes is their votes and my signature.

It's time to do the real work of balancing the budget.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Hong Kong-United States Extradition Agreement

March 3, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification as a treaty, I transmit herewith the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Hong Kong for the Surrender of Fugitive Offenders signed at Hong Kong on December 20, 1996 (hereinafter referred to as "the Agreement"). In addition, I transmit for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Agreement. As a treaty, this Agreement will not require implementing legislation.

This Agreement will, upon entry into force, enhance cooperation between the law enforcement communities of the United States and Hong Kong, and will provide a framework and basic protections for extraditions after the reversion of Hong Kong to the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China on July 1, 1997. Given the absence

of an extradition treaty with the People's Republic of China, this Treaty would provide the means to continue an extradition relationship with Hong Kong after reversion and avoid a gap in law enforcement. It will thereby make a significant contribution to international law enforcement efforts.

The provisions in this Agreement follow generally the form and content of extradition treaties recently concluded by the United States. In addition, the Agreement contains several provisions specially designed in light of the particular status of Hong Kong. The Agreement's basic protections for fugitives are also made expressly applicable to fugitives surrendered by the two parties before the new treaty enters into force.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Agreement and give its advice and consent to its ratification as a treaty.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 3, 1997.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 5.

Remarks on Signing the Memorandum on Child Safety Lock Devices for Handguns and an Exchange With Reporters

March 5, 1997

The President. Good morning. I'd like to welcome here Senators Biden and Boxer, Durbin and Feinstein, Kohl; Congressmen Conyers, Schumer, and Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy; along with Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick, Treasury's Under Secretary for Enforcement Ray Kelly; our friends Jim and Sarah Brady; and members of the law enforcement community. Did I leave anyone from Congress out? Senators? [*Inaudible*] Did I get everybody? Good.

Four years ago, we made a commitment to take our streets back from crime and violence with a comprehensive plan: first, to put 100,000 community police officers on our streets, to put new, tough penalties on the books, to steer young people away from crime and gangs and drugs, to keep guns out