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On May 2, 1997, I reached agreement with the congressional leadership on an historic Bipartisan Budget Agreement that balances the budget while honoring our values. Over the next few months, my Administration worked closely with the leadership to translate the agreement into law. On August 5, I was proud to sign two key elements of the agreement—the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and the Taxpayers Relief Act of 1997. As the current fiscal year comes to a close, we must work together to enact the third element of the agreement, the appropriations bills for fiscal 1998.

But to date, in a number of important instances, the Congress has failed to address matters specifically called for under the agreement. In certain other instances, the Congress has addressed policy issues in ways that make the pending appropriations bills unacceptable. I urge the Congress to approve 1998 spending bills that include the items contained in the agreement and to provide funding for other priority programs.

To give the Congress time to adopt such bills, I have approved this continuing resolution.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
September 30, 1997.

NOTE: H.J. Res. 94, approved September 30, was assigned Public Law No. 105–46.

Statement on the Death of Roy Lichtenstein

September 30, 1997

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Roy Lichtenstein. He will long be remembered as a defining force in the pop art movement.

We grew to love his trademark Benday dots and striking primary colors, which distinguished his unique art form and altered the landscape of American art. He had a talent for presenting everyday cultural symbols in ways that attracted our attention and gave these images a new meaning. Two years ago, I had the honor of presenting to Roy the National Medal of Arts Award in recognition of his contribution to American art. In addition, he was especially valued and treasured by us here in the White House because of his generous support for our Arts in Embassies program.

Hillary and I will miss him. Our thoughts and prayers are with his friends and family in this sad time.

Statement on the Report of the Commission on Immigration Reform

September 30, 1997

The Commission on Immigration Reform, chaired by the Honorable Shirley Hufstedler and the late Barbara Jordan, issued its final report today. This report, which reiterates many of the excellent recommendations contained in the Commission's interim reports, further contributes to our country's understanding of the role of immigration in the United States. I commend the Commission's work and its contribution to the national dialog on immigration policy.

America has always been a nation of immigrants, and I am proud of the significant progress my administration has made toward improving America's immigration system. My administration has curtailed illegal immigration through tougher border control, strengthened worksite enforcement, and the removal of record numbers of criminal and other illegal aliens. We have also worked to improve and tighten the naturalization process and have made needed reforms to our asylum system for refugees fleeing persecution.

One of the Commission's recommendations is to restructure the immigration system by reallocating the main functions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to other agencies. This proposal raises difficult and complex issues which need further consideration. I have asked the Domestic Policy Council to coordinate with the affected Federal agencies to evaluate carefully the Commission's proposal and other reform options designed to improve the executive branch's administration of the Nation's immigration laws.

With this report, the Commission completes its work. I want to thank all of its mem-