

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Transportation Legislation

March 28, 1998

Dear _____:

Since taking office in 1993, my Administration has made a commitment to both fiscal discipline and the strategic investments we need to lay the foundation for a strong and healthy economic future. Our initiatives have helped produce economic conditions never imagined when I first took office. We have reduced the budget deficit from \$290 billion in 1993, and may realize a potential surplus in 1998, reaching balance years before our target date. We now enjoy low unemployment, modest inflation, sustained economic growth and a level of prosperity that is a model for other countries.

Our economic policy has always demonstrated our commitment to public investments in our people to complement our commitment to private investments, fueled by successful deficit reduction. Our priorities have always included a combination of vital investments in education and training, environment, community empowerment, research, infrastructure and transportation.

Certainly investing in a reliable, efficient, and a well-constructed system of highway and mass transit is an important domestic priority and critical to our economic success. In fact, the budget I submitted this year asks for 40 percent more for transportation than the average annual expenditure in the previous administration.

However, I have serious concerns that the extent of proposed new spending in this transportation bill goes too far and could threaten both our fiscal discipline and our commitment to education and other critical investments in our future. Transportation is an important domestic priority, but we must strike a balance so that we do not allow one priority to squeeze out other critical investments such as education or undermine our fiscal discipline.

We should not and need not reject fiscal discipline or force cuts in critical programs on which our citizens and country rely to build a strong America in the 21st century. If we show a balance of our values as we reach a truly balanced budget, we can main-

tain fiscal discipline while maintaining strong investments in both our people and our physical infrastructure.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker, and Richard A. Gephardt, minority leader, House of Representatives, and Trent Lott, majority leader, and Thomas A. Daschle, minority leader, United States Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at the Opening of the Ronald H. Brown Commercial Center in Johannesburg, South Africa

March 28, 1998

Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Motlana, for the wonderful introduction, for the extraordinary example of your career—physician to President Mandela, leader in the struggle for South Africa's freedom, and most recently, one of the most successful businessmen in the new South Africa.

Thank you, Secretary Daley, Congressman Rangel, Secretary Herman, Secretary Slater. To our ambassadors, Mr. Berger, Reverend Jackson; to the Members of Congress and the American business leaders here today, Minister Manuel, to Millard Arnold, thank you for all the work you did on this. And to all the members of the South African community who are here, thank you for what you're doing to build a strong South Africa and to build the bonds of commerce between our two nations.

Let me also say I'm pleased that a young member of my White House staff, born in Johannesburg, Russel Horwitz, is here today with his grandparents, Maurice and Phyllis Goldstein. But I'm especially pleased that Alma Brown is here.

This has been an incredible trip to Africa, a trip which I was urged to make by Ron Brown, starting before I became President. And I was just sitting here thinking that after all this time, Ron Brown can still draw a crowd. *[Laughter]*

This has been a magical tour of this magnificent continent, and in each place, I've