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But the second thing it proves is that it is utterly foolish for people to be diverted or distracted from the urgent challenges still before us. I told you that we had a record—a record low in African-American unemployment and poverty; a record low in the poverty rate for children, of African-American children. Do you know what that record low is? It's about 39 percent. In other words, it's breathtakingly high. That's just one statistic.

So what does that tell me? It tells me that the right thing to do is, if we all put progress over partisanship, put people over politics, put the American people first—what would we do? Well, we would keep the budget balanced. We would save Social Security before we squandered the surplus. We would improve our schools. We would clean up our environment. We would pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. And we would keep the economy going. That's what we would be focused on. That's what I am focused on. That's the way out.

The way out here—and the only way out is for people in Washington to do what the folks in America want them to do, which is to take care of their concerns, their children, and their future. That's what I mean to do, and I'm going to do my best.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Monique Miskimon, administrative assistant, Maryland Committee for Children, Inc., who introduced the President, and her daughter, Jessica; and State Senator Efrain Gonzalez, Jr., of New York, president, National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators.

Statement on the Census Bureau Report on Income and Poverty

September 24, 1998

This morning, the Census Bureau released its annual report on income and poverty. The report shows that our growing economy continues to raise incomes, lift millions out of poverty, and extend opportunity. It represents further evidence that we must maintain fiscal responsibility, investments in our people, and our global leadership on matters of finance and trade.

Last year the income of the typical American household grew by nearly twice the rate of inflation. Since we launched our economic plan in 1993, the typical family's income has risen by more than $3,500. The overall poverty rate fell to 13.3 percent. And while there is clearly more to be done, the African-American poverty rate fell to another record low; Hispanic poverty saw the largest one-year drop in two decades. Child poverty has dropped more in the past 4 years than any 4-year period in nearly 30 years; and the earned-income tax credit, which we have dramatically expanded and fought hard to preserve, raised more than 4 million people out of poverty last year.

All Americans have a right to be proud of these gains. But we can't let these good times lull us into complacency. We must work even harder to make sure that as our Nation races forward, we give everyone a chance to come along.

Statement on the Anniversaries of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Limited Test Ban Treaty

September 24, 1998

Two years ago today, I was proud to be the first world leader to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty—first proposed by President Eisenhower over 40 years ago. Since then, 150 states have signed this historic treaty, including all of our NATO allies, Russia, China, Israel, Japan, and South Korea. Twenty states already have ratified the CTBT, including Britain, France, Germany, Australia, and Brazil. It is my strong hope that India and Pakistan will join the list and thereby reduce nuclear tensions in South Asia. I discussed this with Prime Minister Sharif on Monday, and I welcome his commitment yesterday to adhere to the treaty by next fall. I look forward to further discussion with the leaders of Pakistan and India as we emphasize our common obligation to build peace and stability.

Today also marks the 35th anniversary of the Senate bipartisan vote, 80–19, to approve the Limited Test Ban Treaty, which President Kennedy considered his greatest accomplishment as President. In 1963, Senate