

determined that this budget will make a strong down payment on our drive to hire 100,000 new highly qualified teachers, to reduce class size in the early grades. Today there are a record number of children in our schools, and studies confirm what everyone knows: smaller classes and better-trained teachers make all the difference. We have a duty to provide them.

Smaller classes and more teachers—well, you've got to have some place for the class to meet. All across America, children are being forced to learn in school buildings that are either too crowded or even crumbling or are not wired for the 21st century. I have asked the Republican majority repeatedly to act on an innovative plan to help communities modernize or build 5,000 schools. We can do this without a big new spending program. I thought they would like that. We can do it with targeted tax cuts, tax cuts that are paid for in the balanced budget that do not spend any of the surplus. I can't think of a better tax cut for our country's future than one that gives our children a modern, safe, adequately equipped place to learn.

This balanced budget should also meet our other educational priorities. It should fully fund the after-school programs to bring discipline and learning into the lives of our young people and to give them a change to keep on learning and not be branded failures because they may be in a system that is failing them. It should bring cutting-edge technology to the classroom. We ought to hook up all the classes of this country to the Internet by the year 2000. It should expand Head Start. It should provide funding for the childhood literacy programs so that every child can learn to read well and independently by the third grade. It should support our new monitoring drive to encourage young people to go to college. And finally, I believe it should move forward with voluntary national standards and voluntary national tests in the basics, administered by a bipartisan group.

We should not retreat from our commitments to our children's future. Unfortunately, that commitment was not reflected when the education bill was finally—finally—brought to the House floor yesterday, 8 days into the new budget year. It met none of these challenges. I have instructed my budg-

et team to return to Capitol Hill to make the strongest possible case for the educational priorities that all of us standing here before you today share.

Now, what has happened in this Congress? What is the record to date of the majority? They have killed the bill to reform the way we treat tobacco and to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco. They killed campaign finance reform. They killed the minimum wage.

Today, as Senator Daschle said, the Senate joined the House in putting an end to the Patients' Bill of Rights. That means no guarantees that people will go to the nearest emergency room when they're hurt, that they can see a specialist when they need to, that they won't lose their coverage in the middle of treatment, that their records will be kept private.

They have tried to erode my commitment to saving Social Security first in the House of Representatives. But still it is not too late for us to go forward together on our children's future. Politics should stop at the classroom door. It is not too late.

We are here not simply to state our strong conviction and our willingness—the willingness of these people who have to run—to defer their campaigns to take care of our children's future but to invite our Republican colleagues to join us and finally try to salvage some shred of positive accomplishment for the American people. I hope they'll do it. There is still time.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:41 p.m. at the South Portico at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Proclamation 7136—Columbus Day, 1998**

*October 9, 1998*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Today our Nation stands on the threshold of a new millennium, an uncharted time of great challenge and opportunity. To fulfill

the promise of this new era, we must be adventurous, willing to leave known shores, and eager to embrace change. To find inspiration for this momentous journey, we need only look to the example of Christopher Columbus, who helped usher in a similar Age of Discovery more than 500 years ago.

A skilled and experienced seaman, Columbus pushed back the boundaries of the known world and charted a safe course across the ocean to a new continent. He was a master at reading and using the winds and discovered the best westward and eastward passages between Europe and North America. As Daniel Boorstin wrote in *The Discoverers*, “. . . a sailing vessel today, after all that has been learned in the last five centuries, could not do better than follow Columbus’ route.” Explorers, adventurers, and traders from many nations would follow his lead across the Atlantic, as would millions of immigrants in the centuries following his voyages. Although both a dreamer and a visionary, Columbus—a son of Italy whose enterprise was funded by the Spanish crown—could never have foreseen the multicultural, multiracial Nation that would ultimately emerge in the New World he helped to discover.

As we enter a new era, let us embrace Columbus’ spirit of discovery and embrace as well the great diversity of cultures, religions, and ethnic traditions that we enjoy because so many have followed his course to this great land.

In tribute to Columbus’ many achievements, the Congress, by joint resolution of April 30, 1934 (48 Stat. 657), and an Act of June 28, 1968 (82 Stat. 250), has requested the President to proclaim the second Monday in October of each year as “Columbus Day.”

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 12, 1998, as Columbus Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also direct that the flag of the United States be displayed on all public buildings on the appointed day in honor of Christopher Columbus.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and nine-

ty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:52 a.m., October 13, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 14.

### **Proclamation 7138—General Pulaski Memorial Day, 1998**

*October 9, 1998*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Two hundred nineteen years ago, General Casimir Pulaski selflessly gave his life on an American battlefield, far from his native soil, in a struggle dedicated to the principles of freedom and self-governance. Each year on October 11, America solemnly marks the anniversary of the death of this hero, a man whose devotion to liberty recognized no national boundary.

Born in Poland in 1747, Pulaski first joined the fight against tyranny and oppression at his father’s side, defending their beloved homeland against Prussian and Imperial Russian aggression. At the age of 21, Pulaski took command of a detachment of rebel forces and proved his valor and strategic skill as he led freedom fighters into numerous battles. Struggling against insurmountable odds, he and his fellow rebels were ultimately defeated, and Pulaski was forced into exile.

Carrying the cause of freedom to foreign shores, Pulaski came to America to offer his services to George Washington in our country’s struggle for independence. He wrote to General Washington, “I came here, where freedom is being defended, to serve it, and to live or die for it.” He proved true to his word. Washington was so impressed with Pulaski’s abilities during the battle of Brandywine Creek that he recommended that the Continental Congress appoint Pulaski as general of the American cavalry. Pulaski and the special infantry and cavalry unit he formed