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going on to fundraisers tomorrow and the following day.

The President. Well, let me first of all say that in the State of the Union in January, I sent a program to Congress to save the surplus until Social Security is fixed, to invest in education as I just described, to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights, to keep our economy going amidst all this economic turmoil in the world. In February I sent them a balanced budget with the same education program in it.

This is the first Congress in 24 years that did not pass a budget—in 24 years. Now they have turned their attention to this, and we are making progress. And I worked on it yesterday; I am prepared to do whatever it takes to work with them, now that they have turned their attention to this, to get the job done. But in the end, it is their votes. We are aggressively working with them to resolve this, but they have to decide that they will agree with us after this whole year that it is a priority, that we are going to do it, and that we're going to do it now.

Continuing Resolution Legislation

Q. Mr. President, will you sign another continuing resolution if Congress passes one? Dick Armey said today that he felt one was needed.

The President. You mean for a couple days?

Q. That's right.

The President. Well, sure, we're not going to shut the Government down if we're working on this, of course. No one is interested in doing that. I just want to get this job done.

Representative Richard A. Gephardt. Mr. President, can I add an answer? This Congress has been here probably less than most Congresses, but what I'm worried about is not when they're not here. What I'm worried about is when they are here. They've killed campaign reform; they've killed the tobacco bill; they've killed all the education legislation the President has sent; they killed Patients' Bill of Rights; they tried to spend the surplus on a tax cut, rather than saving it for Social Security.

They shouldn't be worried about whether the President is here or not. The President is here; the President sent the bills. I'm worried about what they do when they are here. They kill everything that the American people want. And that's what they've got to get to work on, to do the things people want done.

1998 Congressional Elections

Q. Mr. President, you characterize this as a do-nothing Congress. Do you think, with the results of the upcoming election, will it be a referendum on your Presidency? You're going to run against this Congress. Do you think the election results will be a referendum on your Presidency?

The President. Well, first of all, I'm not running. But what I do intend to do is to bring the issues to the American people. The American people will have to decide if they believe that Social Security should be saved before this surplus is spent for other things. The American people will have to decide whether they really want a Patients' Bill of Rights that guarantees people in HMO's the right to see a specialist or go to the nearest emergency room or have their medical records private or finish a treatment for chemotherapy or pregnancy before they can be forced to change doctors.

These are the kinds of decisions the American people have to make about what they want for their future. What I'd like to see is this election to be about the American people and their future, not about Washington, DC—just as I think this last year could have been and should have been about the people in America and not about Washington, DC. That is the decision before them, and I trust them. I think they'll make the right decision.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Departure for New York City

October 12, 1998

Budget Negotiations

Good afternoon. While Columbus Day is a day off for many Americans, here at the White House we have been working hard

with the leaders of both parties on Capitol Hill to write a budget to strengthen our Nation for the 21st Century.

I have just spoken with my Chief of Staff, Erskine Bowles. He and our budget team report that they are making progress on important issues, but there are still quite a number of issues still to be resolved; the most critical one, perhaps, is education. Eight months ago, in my State of the Union Address, I asked the Congress to help local communities reduce class size in the early grades by hiring 100,000 new teachers. I also asked Congress to help local communities to build or repair thousands of schools so we would have the classrooms for the teachers to teach in.

A recent study from Congress' own General Accounting Office concluded that as many as one-third of our classrooms are in need of serious modernization and repair. With a third of our children in substandard classrooms, our future is at risk. I believe we can reach across the political divisions here in Washington to take the steps we must to reduce class size, to hire more teachers, to modernize our classrooms. Smaller classes, more teachers, modern classrooms can do for our public schools what 100,000 new police officers are doing to keep our communities safer. This should not be a partisan issue.

I know there's an election coming, but Members of Congress can return home to campaign knowing that they put progress ahead of partisanship on the important issue of education. We need 21st century schools where teachers can teach and students can learn.

Death of Matthew Shepard

Let me also take a moment here to offer my prayers and my condolences to the family of Matthew Shepard, as well as to the community of Laramie, Wyoming, and the university. While it wouldn't be proper for me to comment on the specifics of this case, I do want to say again, crimes of hate and crimes of violence cannot be tolerated in our country. In our shock and grief, one thing must remain clear: Hate and prejudice are not American values. The public outrage in Laramie and all across America today echoes what we heard at the White House Conference on Hate Crimes last year. There is something we can do about this. Congress needs to pass our tough hate crimes legislation. It can do so even before it adjourns, and it should do so.

I hope that in the grief of this moment for Matthew Shepard's family, and in the shared outrage across America, Americans will once again search their hearts and do what they can to reduce their own fear and anxiety and anger at people who are different. And I hope that Congress will pass the hate crimes legislation.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:02 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks at a Reception Honoring Gubernatorial Candidate Peter F. Vallone in New York City

October 12, 1998

The President. Thank you very much. First of all, let me thank Mayor Dinkins for his presence here tonight and his friendship and the many things he did for the people of New York and the many things that he's done for me over the years. And Peter, I want to tell you that I appreciate being invited to come by and be with your friends tonight and your supporters. I thank you and Tena for making this race, and I thank you for the personal support you have given me. I'm very grateful for that.

[*At this point, a telephone rang.*]

The President. Somebody answer that phone. [*Laughter*]

I'd also like to thank you for letting me—I've got one nonpaying guest here tonight, my senior Senator from Arkansas, Dale Bumpers, who's back there. He is universally considered to be the best speaker in the United States Senate, so if we were really being generous, I'd let him talk, and I'd sit down tonight. But I'll pull rank a little bit.

I want to make a couple of points, if I might. First of all, our country is in good shape. Compared to 6 years ago, we are in much better shape. We've got the first surplus in 29 years and the smallest percentage