AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

Weekly Compilation of

Presidential Documents

Monday, January 31, 2000
Volume 36—Number 4
Pages 133–179

Contents

Addresses to the Nation

State of the Union—160

Addresses and Remarks

California, Democratic National Committee luncheon in Los Angeles—134
Equal pay initiative—139
Federal budget, FY 2001—145
Radio address—133
U.S. Conference of Mayors breakfast reception—172

Communications to Congress

China, letter on permanent normal trade relations status—143
Deployment of military forces for stabilization of areas of the former Yugoslavia, letter reporting—159

Communications to Federal Agencies

Delegation of Authority To Conduct Assessments and Promulgate Regulations On Public Access to Off-Site Consequence Analysis Information, memorandum—160

Interviews With the News Media

Exchange with reporters in the Briefing Room—145
Interview with Jim Lehrer of PBS' "NewsHour"—151

Statements by the President

Death of Bob Squier—143
Supreme Court decision on campaign financing—142

Supplementary Materials

Acts approved by the President—179
Checklist of White House press releases—179
Digest of other White House announcements—178
Nominations submitted to the Senate—179

Editor's Note: The President was in Quincy, IL, on January 28, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* is published pursuant to the authority contained in the Federal Register Act (49 Stat. 500, as amended; 44 U.S.C. Ch. 15), under regulations prescribed by the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, approved by the President (37 FR 23607; 1 CFR Part 10).

Distribution is made only by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* will be furnished by mail to domestic subscribers for $80.00 per year ($137.00 for mailing first class) and to foreign subscribers for $93.75 per year, payable to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The charge for a single copy is $3.00 ($3.75 for foreign mailing).

There are no restrictions on the republication of material appearing in the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents.*

Week Ending Friday, January 28, 2000

The President's Radio Address

January 22, 2000

Good morning. In just a few days, I will report to the American people and the Congress on the State of the Union, and I'll propose new ways to meet the many challenges of this exciting new century. One of the most important challenges we have is strengthening and modernizing Medicare. Today I want to give you a progress report on our efforts to do just that, through our ongoing fight against fraud, waste, and abuse in the Medicare system.

For more than 30 years now, Medicare has helped us fulfill one of our most fundamental obligations, to protect the health of older Americans. But when I became President, Medicare was projected to go bankrupt by 1999. Since I took office, we have made tough choices to strengthen Medicare. We've extended the life of the Trust Fund until at least 2015, with better management not only of Medicare but of the economy and by waging a sustained campaign against Medicare fraud.

Medicare fraud and waste are more than an abuse of the system; they're an abuse of the taxpayer. By overbilling, charging for phony procedures, and selling substandard supplies, Medicare cheats cost taxpayers hundreds of millions a year. That's why we've assigned more Federal prosecutors and FBI agents than ever to fight this kind of fraud, and why we've invested in new tools to investigate and prosecute these crimes. All told, our efforts have prevented the wasteful spending of an estimated $50 billion, and aggressive enforcement has recovered nearly $1.6 billion for the Medicare Trust Fund.

Today I'm releasing two reports that show just how effective this fight against fraud has been. Americans can be proud. The first report shows that in 1999 we recovered nearly half a billion dollars in fines and settlements and returned three-quarters of that to the Medicare Trust Fund. The second report, on Medicare integrity, shows our success in catching fraudulent claims and preventing $5.3 billion worth of inappropriate payments in the last year alone. So when it comes to prosecuting fraud and abuse, we're doing more than filing cases; we're also winning convictions.

In the last year, convictions in health care fraud cases shot up by a fifth, for an increase of more than 410 percent since I became President. Just this week the Department of Justice won another important victory for Medicare beneficiaries. A health care company had been bilking Medicare by sending patients for needless tests and procedures. The more tests providers ordered, the more kickbacks they got in return—lavish dinners, yacht trips. Federal prosecutors took the company to court and won the largest such settlement in history, recovering nearly half a billion dollars.

The more cases we win, the more criminals we convict, the clearer the message becomes: Medicare fraud is a serious crime with serious consequences.

Though our efforts are stronger than ever, Medicare contractors still pay false claims totaling in the billions. That is simply unacceptable. So today I'm announcing a new initiative to crack down on fraud and abuse in Medicare. My balanced budget for 2001 will create a team of Medicare fraud fighters—one in the office of every Medicare contractor in America—and take other new steps to ensure that our response to fraud is coordinated and quick. The budget also funds new technologies to track false claims.

I urge Congress to make these investments and to give Medicare the authority to bid competitively for contractors who administer the program, as well as for services provided directly to beneficiaries.

Medicare is vital to the health of our Nation. It's too important ever to be compromised. If we take these steps to reform

and strengthen Medicare, and if we modernize it with a voluntary prescription drug benefit, then we will adapt a program that has worked in the past to the needs of the future.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:26 p.m. on January 21 at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 22. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 21 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Los Angeles, California

January 22, 2000

Thank you very much. I am, first of all, delighted to be here. I want to thank Irwin and Lynne for putting this luncheon together on short notice, and I thank all of you for coming. I thank Gray and Sharon Davis for being here to share this moment with us and for their longtime friendship not only to the Deutchs but to Hillary and me.

The first person who told me that Gray Davis was the most underrated politician in America was my wife. [*Laughter*] She's got a pretty good feel for those things. And I congratulate you on your success, and even more on the substance of what you have fought for and achieved. It's one thing to win elections and be popular; it's another thing to do the right things. You're doing the right things now. I admire you, and I thank you for it. It's very important.

I thank Joel Hyatt for becoming one of our co-finance chairs. A lot of you don't know him as well as I do because he hasn't been in California very long. But he founded a remarkable company called Hyatt Legal Services, which swept the Northeast, and provided affordable legal services for real people, many of whom could never afford to come to an event like this, and made him a famous character because he was on television all the time. And he was also prominent in Ohio, democratic politics, where his father-in-law, Howard Metzenbaum, was our United States Senator. And he is a wonderful guy. So he's out here now, and I want you to take care of him. Make him look good by helping him raise money for the Democratic Party.

I want to thank Jane Harman for being willing to serve in Congress again and for being there before. Our economic plan in 1993, which passed by a single vote in both Houses—or, as the Vice President says, "Whenever I vote, we win"—[*laughter*]—but it passed by a single vote in both Houses, really sparked this astonishing economic recovery we've had. And so there's a real sense in which Jane Harman can say, "If it hadn't been for me it wouldn't have happened." [*Laughter*] And I think she is one of the ablest people that I have served with, with the Congress, and one who most embodies the philosophy that I have tried to get our party and our country to embrace. So thank you, Jane Harman, for being willing to do this.

And of course, I want to thank the Women's Leadership Forum for this and for all the countless events we've had around the country, mobilizing a whole group of people, many of whom never have been involved in national political affairs before. So thank you, and thank all of you for coming.

Now, I want to just make a couple of points about what has previously been said by Janice and Mayor Rendell, who we're very lucky to have, because he was a fabulous mayor of Philadelphia and always made sure the Clinton-Gore ticket carried Pennsylvania, which is a not inconsiderably important thing in the business we're in. [*Laughter*]

Number one, I am very grateful for the chance that Hillary and I and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore have had to serve these last 7 years. I celebrated my seventh anniversary as President the day before yesterday, and I'm very grateful for that and for the progress that our country has made. I am grateful that it's about more than economics. Our country is beginning to come together more. We have the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years; the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded; the lowest single-parent household poverty rate in 46 years; the lowest overall poverty rate in more than 20 years; the highest homeownership in history; cleaner air, cleaner water,

safer food; we tripled the number of toxic waste sites we cleaned up from the previous 12 years; we set aside more land—a lot of you mentioned that to me today—we set aside more land in perpetuity to protect, in the continental United States, than any administration in our history except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt.

Over 20 million people have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law, take a little time off from work without losing their jobs to take care of a newborn or a sick parent. About 5 million people have now claimed the HOPE scholarship tax credit that's designed to open the doors of college to all Americans for at least 2 years. We've had about half a million people haven't been able to buy handguns because they have criminal backgrounds, because of the Brady bill. A lot of people are alive because of that. And I could go on—90 percent of our kids were immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time in the history of the United States. And our country has been a force for peace and freedom around the world, from Bosnia and Kosovo to Northern Ireland to the Middle East to our efforts to try to help African nations resolve their difficulties. And I could just go on and on. I am very grateful for where we are now, especially when I remember where we were in 1992. And I hope that's one of the reasons you're here today.

But the second thing I would like to say is that, in my lifetime—which, thankfully, continues to lengthen—even though I don't like it—[*laughter*]—I tell this story all the time. A 6-year-old girl was one of the—a friend of ours spent some time with us over Thanksgiving weekend. He brought his kids up there. They've got four little kids. And the second youngest is a 6-year-old girl. And she looked up at me and she says, "Well, how old are you, anyway?" [*Laughter*] And I said, "Well, I'm 53." And she said, "Oh, that's a lot." [*Laughter*] The kid should be in the movies. [*Laughter*]

And it is, but it gives you the benefit of memory. In February, next month, in just a few days, this will become the longest economic expansion in the history of the United States, including those which, for example, embraced the Second World War, when we had to be fully mobilized. Nothing like this has ever happened before. Part of it is the explosion in information technology, much of which came out of California. Part of it is our success in exporting our culture and ideas around the world, a lot of which comes out of California. But part of it is the environment and conditions and tools we established when we changed the whole direction of the country and got us out of debt, and still continued to invest more in education and in making our streets safer and our air cleaner and our children healthier.

Now, in my lifetime we have never had the following conditions all in the same place at the same time. We have never had so much economic progress, social progress, political self-confidence as a nation—I say "political," as citizens we're pretty confident—with the absence of an overwhelming or paralyzing domestic crisis or foreign threat. We'll always have security threats, but there is nothing—this is not the cold war; this is not the Vietnam war. This never happened. The last time we had an economy that in the terms of that age was about this good was in the early sixties, and it came apart with riots in the streets and the paying for the Vietnam war, paying for it in cash and paying for it in blood and politics. We have never had a time like this.

One of my friends said to me this morning when we were talking, he said, "You know, the problem is, things are going along so well, nobody wants to talk about this; people aren't really obsessed with this election." And I guess what I want to say to you is, you should be; because there is an enormous opportunity here and, therefore, an enormous responsibility to make the most of what is truly a magic moment that coincidentally fits with the changing of the century and the millennium. But I'm just telling you that a time like this doesn't come along very often, where all the social indicators are getting better; the economy is booming and becoming more widely shared; we are not paralyzed by a domestic crisis or a foreign threat; we have the ability to chart the future of our dreams for our children. That's what this election is all about.

If the whole 20th century could be fairly characterized as the triumph of freedom over

depression and want, over nazism and fascism, over communism, then the question for the 20th century would be whether that freedom is wisely used. For the first time in all history, more than half the people of the world live under governments of their own choosing. But over a billion people in this old world live on less than $2 a day. There are a lot of challenges out there.

So I say to you, you know, I'm not running for anything. The reason I'm here is because I worked like crazy to turn this country around, to make sure people believed America could work, just so we would be in this position, and it would be an era of colossal proportions. If we treated this like an ordinary election, a ho-hum deal—how many times—everybody in this room who is over 30 can cite at least one time in your life when you got in trouble and made big mistakes because you thought things were going so well that you didn't have to think about tomorrow; you didn't have to make any tough decisions; you could be sort of self-indulgent; you could get distracted because everything is going so well, nothing could go wrong. If you live long enough, that will happen to you; that's human nature. [*Laughter*] It's just a question of whether you live long enough. Sooner or later everybody makes that mistake in some way or another.

Well, countries are no different from individuals and families and businesses. So the test is whether freedom will be wisely used, what will we make of this magic moment? Gray said we've taken some issues off the table for the Republicans. I think there is a reason for that. Until 1992, the political debate was always an either/or proposition in Washington. There was a Democratic proposition, a Republican proposition—a liberal proposition, a conservative proposition. And everybody got put in their little boxes, and they lobbed their verbal bombshells across the great divide at each other. Nothing ever happened, but at least we could understand who the players were. The only problem was, nobody lived like that, the way Washington talked.

And so we said, the Vice President and I did, "Look, give us a chance, and we won't say Government is the problem or the solution. We'll say the Government should be the partner of the American people, if the role of Government is to establish the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives. We won't say that Government can guarantee opportunity to everybody, but we'll say Government should provide opportunity to every responsible citizen, that you have to do your part. And we will say that we should have a community of all Americans." And it's worked. So that's the first point I want to make. It's worked.

But all it's done is to bring us to the point now where we can face these big challenges. I'll just mention a few of them. We're going to double the number of people over 65 in the next 30 years. I hope to be one of them. [*Laughter*] At present retirement rates, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. Are we going to save Social Security and Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit for the 75 percent of the seniors who can't afford it themselves, or not? Big question. And how are we going to do it to make sure that when the baby boomers retire we don't bankrupt our kids and their ability to raise our grandkids? Huge question.

Example number two. We have the largest number—Los Angeles knows this—we have the largest number of school children in our history and the most diverse. The good news is that in an increasingly globalized society it means America is the best positioned big country in the world for tomorrow. This diversity is our meal ticket to tomorrow. But only if we can figure out how to make sure these ever more diverse kids all get a world-class education. No one has ever done it before; no other society has ever had to do it before. Universal educational opportunity for people, without regard to race or income in this kind of environment. No one has ever tried to do anything of this dimension before.

Example number three. We've got the lowest crime rate in 30 years, and that's good. But anybody who believes America is safe enough, please stand. Just the accidental death rate of children by guns in this country—just the accidental death rate of children by guns—I want you all to listen to this—is 9 times higher than the accidental gun death rate of the next 25 largest industrial economies combined.

So I say, we now know—you know, in '92 a lot of people didn't believe the crime rate would ever go down again. So we got a lower crime rate. We know we can do this: Sensible gun legislation, preventive things, get the kids involved in positive things, put enough police on the street—do the things that work. I think as a nation we ought to set a goal that America is going to be the safest big country in the world in the next 10 years, and we're going to keep going until we do it so that every child can feel safe again. We can do this. You don't have to doubt it anymore.

Now, those are just three examples. And I could give you lots more. I'll give you just one or two more, just so you can think about it. America grew rich in an industrial economy and is now becoming even wealthier in a post-industrial, information-technology economy. The industrial economy was powered by energy, translated into electricity, primarily, and into gasoline. It made factories work, moved cars and trucks around, made trains run, with the help of coal—coal and oil—turned into these things.

Now, in the industrial economy, in order to get richer you had to burn more energy. And if the energy you burned was based on oil and coal, you put into the air more greenhouse gases. That's what causes global warming—a big issue in the world today and huge for your children and grandchildren. I believe America is in a position to prove that for the first time in history a country can grow rich and build a middle class and actually improve the environment and put fewer greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, because the economy has changed, the technology has changed. And that's very important for your kids. Do you know why? Because until climate change came along, every environmental problem was reversible.

So, for example, a lot of us who used to go to Japan, 20, 25 years ago, can remember when workers in Japan would wear masks, surgical masks to work, riding their bicycles. And now the air is cleaner than it is in many American cities, in Tokyo. That's just one example. Every environmental problem was reversible. A lot of you remember when you could strike a match on a Great Lake in America and start a fire—[*laughter*]—and a lot of them are very clean now, though we've got a new initiative to do even more. The climate change, it's reversible, but not for a long time. Once that stuff gets in the air, it hangs around and continues to warm the climate for 100 years.

So we've got to figure out how to prove, not only to Americans but to people all over the world, that I'm right—[*laughter*]—you can grow the economy, get rich, and improve the environment. The Detroit auto show this year has four-seater cars that will be commercially available very soon, get 70 and 80 miles a gallon. There is a modest income housing project in the Inland Empire, not far from here, built in cooperation with HUD, the Energy Department, and the Home Builders a couple years ago. I went out there for the announcement, and we told these lower income working people if they moved into this housing project, because we had new lighting that was more efficient, new insulation that was more efficient, and glass that let in more heat, that kept out more heat and cold and let in more light, that their power bills would go down an average of 40 percent. They've gone down an average of 65 percent.

If you've been following the Presidential campaign, you know in Iowa there is a lot of talk about ethanol. And that's because people grow corn. But let me tell you what the big issue is. The big issue is, today you can make ethanol efficiently but not real efficiently. It just takes about 7 gallons of gasoline to make about 8 gallons of ethanol. That's why there's a fight about it. But scientists, in projects funded by us, are on the verge of breaking the chemical barriers to the efficient transformation of not just corn but all kinds of biomass—rice hulls, field grasses into fuel. When that happens, it will have the same impact that turning crude oil into gasoline had 100 years ago. And you will be able to make 8 gallons of biomass fuel with one gallon of gasoline. Which means that, in effect, when you get the next generation of cars, if they run on ethanol, you'll be getting the equivalent of 500 miles a gallon.

This is going to happen within your lifetime. Within just a few years, young mothers

will bring home their babies from the hospital with genetic maps that will tell them all the possible things that can go right and wrong in their lives and how to plan to lengthen and strengthen their children's lives. And most of my friends in the medical field that study this believe that early in the new century young mothers will bring home babies with a life expectancy of 100 years. In America today, people over 65 have a life expectancy, on average, of 83. So this is an exciting time. But you can see, we've got all these new challenges. And I'll just mention one last one.

I know you all maybe get tired of me talking about this, but I think it is the supreme irony of our age that we're talking about unlocking the mysteries of the human gene and finding out what's in the black holes in the universe and driving cars that get 100 miles a gallon. But the biggest problem of human nature is the oldest problem of human society: People's fear of people who are different from them. You think about it. What have we done with the end of the cold war? What has it wrought? It's like it took this big old lid, this metal lid off all these long-simmering, festering fears and hatreds all around the world. So you've got Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, trouble again brewing in Burundi and Africa. You've got, obviously, the Middle East and Northern Ireland. You've got less well known ethnic and religious conflicts in western China—a long way from CNN coverage—all over the world.

And here in America you have this upsurge of hate crimes: James Byrd in Texas, Matthew Shepard in Wyoming, the Jewish community school here in Los Angeles, and then the Filipino postal worker who was murdered. And then the guy who went on a rampage who said he belonged to a church in the Middle West that believed not in God but did believe in white supremacy—so he kills an African-American basketball coach, a young Korean Christian coming out of school, and a bunch of other people, just because they were the wrong ethnic or racial or religious group.

And it's very interesting, isn't it, that all these really ugly, primitive things and the dominant problems are the world's inability to get rid of things come from the fact that we have a tendency, first of all, to be afraid of people who are different from us, then we distrust them. And then it's not a big step to dehumanize them, and then once you do that, you can justify killing them. It's a sort of a slippery slope. And this trust thing is such a problem. I don't know how many times we've been right up to the edge in a lot of these peace processes I've worked in the last 7 years, and then some hangnail will develop. And when you strip away all the rhetoric, it is: I just don't know; I don't know if I can hold hands with this person and jump off this diving board. [*Laughter*]

And I want you to think about that. Because I believe building one America, whether it's in specific things like passing the "Employment and Non-Discrimination Act" or the "Hate Crimes Act" or just demonstrating that we can work together across the lines that divide us, in some ways is more important than all the other stuff that I've worked on. The American people nearly always get it right. This is a great country with a bunch of brainpower and a bunch of energy and a bunch of wealth. And the truth is, if we can get this right, if we can figure out how to let go of all of our accumulated resentments, we're going to do just fine.

So, number one, the country is better than it was 7 years ago. And it's not an accident. And it has something to do with the fact that we did the right things. Number two, we should be thinking about the big challenges before us—and they are significant—and not be dumb enough to think we can relax and sleep our way through this election season.

And the last point I want to make is this, not in any hateful way. There is a significant difference between the two parties and the two candidates, which will manifest itself in all kinds of ways. The next President—I appointed two members to the Supreme Court; in all probability, the next President will appoint more. And you saw the headline Mayor Rendell held up. There is absolutely no question in my mind that whether *Roe* v. *Wade* is preserved or scrapped depends on what happens in the Presidential race. And to pretend otherwise is naive in the extreme. It's not whether your compassion is good or bad; it's what you believe. And we ought to tell

the American people what we really believe and let them decide.

And I appreciate Governor Bush being candid enough to say he didn't believe in *Roe* v. *Wade*. In another article a couple weeks ago he said the two Justices on the Supreme Court he most admired were Justices Scalia and Clarence Thomas. I think this is good. [*Laughter*] No, no, this is a good thing. People should say what they think. And we shouldn't be hateful about it; we shouldn't be mean; we don't have to get in the—but we should make sure that everybody knows where everybody else is coming from in this deal. And it's not helpful to go around with your head in the sand and pretend that there are no consequences here.

I believe we ought to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835. I think one of the reasons we're cooking right along here is that we've gone from running up debt to paying debt off. We've even paid some of our debt off early this year, for the first time in history, ever. And that keeps interest rates down lower for the rest of you and enables us to have more broadly shared access to capital and to keep things going. So even though I am a Democrat, I'm going to recommend at the State of the Union we spend more money on education and health care, the environment. I want to keep running some surpluses and keep paying this debt down and not fool with the Social Security portion of the surplus so we can get out of debt for the first time.

If we adopt the tax cut that the leading candidate in the other party has proposed, it won't happen. And all of us will get money out of it. I mean, you'll all be happy for a month or 2. But it's a bad deal. We won't have the money we need to continue to improve education, and we will not be able to manage this economic situation, and we will never get this country out of debt over the next 10 to 15 years. So there are real consequences here.

So again I say, I'm glad you're here. But when you leave here, I want you to leave with a renewed sense of citizen activism. I want it to be beyond writing checks. And if somebody asks you how come you were there, I want you to be able to tell them: number one, it's better than it was 7 years ago, and they had specific ideas, and they implemented them, and it worked. Number two, we've got to think about what the big challenges of the future are. And number three, there is a real difference between the two parties. And we don't have to be badmouthing each other and throwing rocks at each other and saying terrible things about each other—we can just have an honest discussion about that. That's one thing I do hope our new self-confidence will allow us to have, a less acrimonious, less hateful election, but it should be no less intense. So I ask you all of that.

You know, most of us have been blessed or we wouldn't be here today. Our grandchildren's generation should never forgive us if we walk away from our responsibility to do what is necessary in this millennial election, so that they will be living the future of their dreams.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the Grille Room at the Regency Club. In his remarks, he referred to brunch hosts Irwin and Lynne Deutch; Gov. Gray Davis of California and his wife, Sharon; Joel Hyatt, finance cochair, and Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Janice Griffin, national chair, Women's Leadership Forum; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks Announcing the Equal Pay Initiative

January 24, 2000

Thank you. Well, first of all, I think Sharon was a little apprehensive coming out here because she doesn't do public speaking for a living. But I thought she was magnificent, and I thank her for it. I want to thank Secretary Herman for her leadership on this issue, and Secretary Shalala, and our EEOC Chair, Ida Castro, who is here.

We have a number of Members of Congress who are here, and I would like to acknowledge their presence, because this will be a bipartisan effort. I thank—we'll start down here—Congressman Eliot Engel from New York, Congressman Jim McGovern from Massachusetts, Congresswoman Ellen

Tauscher from California, Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton from the District of Columbia, Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson from Texas, Representative Rosa DeLauro from Connecticut, Representative Ted Strickland from Ohio, Representative Connie Morella from Maryland, and Representative Albert Wynn from Maryland. Thank you all for coming.

I'd also like to thank Donna de Varona for being here. She was the World's Cup organizing chair last year, and herself a great athlete; and she's now working with General McCaffrey and the Olympics Committee to try to make sure that the Olympics in Sydney and all future Olympics are properly conducted in every conceivable way. Thank you very much for being here; we're delighted to see you.

I want to thank Michelle Akers for coming here and telling the story of her life and her family's. I think all of us who saw the Women's World Cup final—and I had the privilege of being there, much to the dismay of my wife and daughter, I had the privilege of going—[*laughter*]—were truly overwhelmed by the experience. It was one of those just excruciatingly exciting moments. Grown people of both genders were weeping in our group.

And afterward, you may remember that Michelle took quite a blow and was hurt. And I saw her walking through the stadium after the game, and I went up to her and I said, "You're my favorite because you can take a punch, and I know something about that." [*Laughter*] And so I am delighted that she was able to come here and be with us today and delighted that she has both continued to fight for the interests of women athletes and never forgotten about the experience of her own mother.

You heard Michelle talking about the role of Title IX. Whenever something really magnificent happens, like that World Cup final, it's a tribute to—it's not just a moment. In that moment, you see years and years and years of hard work and determination and victory and disappointment—all the things people go through—that is all lost in the glory of the moment. And something no one ever thinks about is, how did these people get this opportunity? What kind of framework was there so that they got to develop their talents and live their dreams?

Well, that's what Title IX is all about, and we've had the honor, Hillary and I have, of having big events here at the White House to celebrate Title IX, and that wonderful HBO series on the history of women and sports, which I hope you've all seen—if you hadn't, you ought to make arrangements to do so. But if you were thinking about the application of the principle of Title IX to the workplace, and you think about Sharon Long's heroic story—and how many people like her there have been; how many countless people like her there have been, who didn't stand up and fight like she did—then you have to view the Equal Pay Act as Title IX for the playing field of life. That's why I'm glad both these women are here today.

We want to make sure that in every field of endeavor, everyone knows that those who work hard and play by the rules will have the chance to make the most of their abilities. This is about the value of work, the values of our country. It's about whether people can truly have a chance to choose the life they will lead; and for women, increasingly, it's about whether they'll have the chance to succeed both at home and at work.

That's what the family leave law was all about. Twenty million people have now taken advantage of that, to take some time off and not lose their jobs when there's a baby born or a sick parent. It's what the earned-income tax credit and the minimum wage and the child care reference and the strengthened pension coverage that these Members of Congress have worked with me on over these last few years are all about. And so today, because there's still a big need, as you have heard, we want to take new steps this year to reward work, to strengthen pay, and to make equal pay a reality for all Americans.

First of all, I want to propose a $27-million equal pay initiative, which will be part of my budget, to expand opportunities for women and to do more to end wage discrimination. If Congress agrees, we'll be making the largest investment ever to promote equal pay. There's never been a better time to take on this challenge. We have the strongest economy in generations; more than 20 million

new jobs; next month, the longest economic expansion in American history.

Working women have had a big role in this economic expansion. You heard Secretary Herman detailing that in just the last year. And women are sharing in the progress. Listen to this. Even though we have a higher percentage of women in the work force than ever before, the female unemployment rate is now the lowest since the end of World War II—the lowest female household poverty rate, female-headed household poverty rate we have ever recorded; wages for women up 25 percent since 1992. The pay gap has narrowed by about half since the Equal Pay Act was passed back in 1963.

But that means that we've still got half to go, after 37 years. And 25 percent is a lot of money. You heard—Secretary Herman gave you her grocery store analogy. How would you like to show up for work every day, but only get to take home three out of every four paychecks? If someone tried to do that, there would be riots in the street; but if you get paid 75 percent for the same kind of work, it's as if you were only picking up three paychecks, instead of four, in four pay periods.

The average woman has to work, therefore, an extra 17 weeks a year to earn what a similarly-qualified man in the same kind of job makes. And even after you make adjustments—and that's why I thought what Sharon said was so important today, to hammer home this point. Yes, some of this can be explained by differences in education, experience, and occupation. But even after you make all those adjustments, there is still a very significant gap. As women get older, the gap gets wider. And it is widest, regrettably, for women of color. African-American women earn 64 cents for every dollar earned by white men; Hispanic women, just 55 cents.

Now, this is not just a women's issue. And I appreciate the fact that we have five women Members of Congress and four men here. I'm the son of a working mother, the grandson of a working grandmother, the husband of a working wife, and my daughter plans to follow suit. I've joked, every time I do an event like this, that the first time in our entire marriage that I made more money than Hillary was when I became President—[*laughter*]—and all I'm really doing is trying to give other men the privilege of riding on the same gravy train I did all these years. [*Laughter*]

But it's not a women's issue. If a woman with a family is being denied equal pay for equal work, then her husband suffers, her children suffer, the family dynamic suffers. You think about how much time you spend at work every day; you can't go to a workplace and feel like you're getting the shaft and not have it have an impact that goes even beyond economics on your home life. And I'm glad—Sharon has her husband and family members here today. They all pay. Everybody pays. So this is a big issue in that sense.

I'd also like to point out that it's a much bigger economic issue, even than the paycheck. Why? Because if you make less, then you have less going into your Social Security account, and you'll earn less in your Social Security check. Because if you make less, you're far less likely to be able to have your own retirement plan. And if you do have one, it'll be smaller.

The average women who is about to retire—keep in mind the pay gap is 75 percent—the average women who is about to retire, if she even gets a pension in the first place, can expect only about half the pension benefits of the average man who retires. So the pay gap leads to an even bigger retirement gap. And this is something we have to think about more and more and more. And again, it's not just a women's issue.

The poverty rate among elderly women is about twice the poverty rate for people over 65, generally. The number of people over 65 will double in the next 30 years. Americans today who are 65 years old already have a life expectancy in excess of 82 years. And women live a few years longer than men, on the average. This is a huge deal, with implications for our entire society, even for families where women do not experience discrimination in the workplace. They, too, will be affected in an aging society where more and more retirees are women who are severely disadvantaged.

So today we want to close those gaps. First, I propose $10 million for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to train more

than 1,000 EEOC enforcement personnel to identify and respond to wage discrimination. This would be, believe it or not, the first time the EEOC has ever received funding for this kind of training. The resources will also be used to educate employers and workers about their responsibilities and their rights under the law.

I made this request last year, and Congress failed to pass it. I again implore Congress to do the right thing and pass this funding. And I hope you will help us do this. If we train enough people to spot the problems early and work on them aggressively, the EEOC can help give us more stories like Sharon Long's, without the waiting time.

Second, another important way to close the wage gap is to open new opportunities. So we propose a $17 million investment in the Department of Labor, to include resources to expand opportunities for women in nontraditional jobs. We're making headway in the construction industry. We're also going to put a special focus on the jobs of the future in the high-tech industry.

Today—listen to this—men outnumber women by more than two-to-one in many high-tech occupations. These are among the highest paid jobs in our economy, paying on average almost 80 percent above the average jobs. Now, that's another element of the digital divide. We need to close the divide in employment and expand opportunities for women in these kinds of jobs.

Third, and finally, we need to clearly send the message that wage discrimination against women is just as unacceptable as discrimination based on race or ethnicity. So once again I ask the Congress to pass the "Paycheck Fairness Act" sponsored by Representative DeLauro and Senator Tom Daschle. Pass it. It's a good bill. There is no excuse not to pass it. We plainly need to strengthen the law. We've had the other Equal Pay Act on the books since 1963, and we've still got a 25 percent gap. The evidence is there. We should have been able to eliminate this problem after 37 years, and we have to do more.

Again, I say—and I thank, particularly, Representative Morella for being here—this is not a Democratic or a Republican issue; it's a family issue, and it's an American issue. It's about what kind of country we want our children to grow up in. I am delighted that these young women in the soccer team have come here as a team. And it must be a great thrill for them to see Michelle Akers, and I hope it spurs them to greater achievement in athletics and in academics. Most of them won't be professional soccer players. Most of them will be in the work force.

We do not want them to grow up and have children in a country which still has not solved this problem. And we can do better. Again I say that the same rules that apply on the playing field ought to apply in life. People who work hard and play by the rules ought to be rewarded, and rewarded in proportion to their contribution, not their gender.

This is a time of enormous promise. As I always say when I urge greater action to bring economic opportunity to poor areas that have been left behind, if we can't deal with this issue now, at a time of unprecedented prosperity, when in the wide world will we ever get around to dealing with it?

I thank the Members of Congress for their commitment. I thank you for being here. I ask you to help us bear down and act, now.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Sharon Long, who introduced the President; and Michelle Akers, member, 1999 Women's World Cup U.S. championship team. The President also referred to Title IX—Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, part of Public Law 92–318, the Education Amendments of 1972.

Statement on the Supreme Court Decision on Campaign Financing

January 24, 2000

The Court's opinion is a victory for democracy. The American people know that our political system needs to be fixed, and today's decision sets the stage for further reform. For years, I've challenged Congress to pass legislation that would ban the raising of unregulated soft money, address backdoor spending by outside organizations, and strengthen public discourse. Now I am again

asking Congress to restore the American people's faith in their democracy and pass real reform this year.

Statement on the Death of Bob Squier

January 24, 2000

Hillary and I were deeply saddened by the death of Bob Squier. Bob was a valued adviser, a good friend, and a fine man. His loyalty, talent, and, above all, his perseverance helped Vice President Gore and me craft a winning reelection campaign in 1996 when many had counted us out. I owe him much.

Throughout the course of his career, Bob was a pioneer in the art of modern communications. With his documentary films, his pathbreaking political commentary, and his work for progressive candidates, Bob helped make policy and politics understandable and exciting for millions of Americans. Our thoughts and prayers tonight are with Prudy, his sons, and grandchildren.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Permanent Normal Trade Relations Status With China

January 24, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On November 15th of last year, my Administration signed an historic trade agreement with the People's Republic of China. Bringing China into the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the strong terms we negotiated will advance critical economic and national security goals. It will open a growing market to American workers, farmers, and businesses. And more than any other step we can take right now, it will draw China into a system of international rules and thereby encourage the Chinese to choose reform at home and integration with the world. For these reasons, I will make it a top priority in the new year to seek congressional support for permanent Normal Trade Relations (NTR) with China.

A Good Deal for America

This agreement is good for America. It is important to understand the *one-way nature of the concessions* in this agreement. China has agreed to grant the United States *significant new access* to its market, while we have agreed simply to maintain the market access policies we *already* apply to China by granting it permanent NTR. China's commitments are enforceable in the WTO and include specially negotiated rules. In the event of a violation, the U.S. will have the right to trade retaliation against China.

China's comprehensive market-opening concessions will benefit U.S. workers, farmers and businesses. On U.S. priority agricultural products, tariffs will drop from an average of 31% to 14% in January 2004. China will expand access for bulk agricultural products, permit private trade in these products, and eliminate export subsidies. Industrial tariffs on U.S. products will fall from an average of 25% in 1997 to an average of 9.4% by 2005. In information technology, tariffs on products such as computers, semiconductors, and all Internet related equipment will decrease from an average of 13% to zero by 2005. The agreement also opens China's market for services, including distribution, insurance, telecommunications, banking, professional and environmental services. Considering that our farmers and workers are the most productive in the world, this agreement promises vast opportunities for American exports.

Prior to the final negotiations, Democrats and Republicans in Congress raised legitimate concerns about the importance of safeguards against unfair competition. This agreement effectively addresses those concerns. No agreement on WTO accession has ever contained stronger measures against unfair trade, notably a "product-specific" safeguard that allows us to take measures focused directly on China in case of an import surge that threatens a particular industry. This protection remains in effect a full 12 years after China enters the WTO and is stronger and more targeted relief than that provided under our current Section 201 law.

The agreement also protects against dumping. China agreed that for 15 years after its accession to the WTO, the United States may employ special methods, designed for nonmarket economies, to counteract dumping.

Moreover, Americans will, for the first time, have a means, accepted under the WTO, to combat such measures as forced technology transfer, mandated offsets, local content requirements and other practices intended to drain jobs and technology away from the U.S. As a result, we will be able to export to China from home, rather than seeing companies forced to set up factories in China in order to sell products there. The agreement also increases our leverage with the Chinese in the event of a future trade dispute. As a member of the WTO, China must agree to submit disputes to that body for adjudication and would be much less likely to thwart the will of the WTO's 135 members than that of the United States acting alone.

Under WTO rules, we may—even when dealing with a country enjoying permanent NTR status—continue to block imports of goods made with prison labor, maintain our export control policies, use our trade laws, and withdraw benefits including NTR itself in a national security emergency.

Promoting Reform in China and Creating a Safer World

Of course, this trade agreement alone cannot bring all the change in China we seek, including greater respect for human rights. We must and will continue to speak out on behalf of people in China who are persecuted for their political and religious beliefs; to press China to respect global norms on nonproliferation; to encourage a peaceful resolution of issues with Taiwan; to urge China to be part of the solution to the problem of global climate change. And we will hold China to the obligations it is accepting by joining the WTO.

We will continue to protect our interests with firmness and candor. But we must do so without isolating China from the global forces empowering its people to build a better future. For that would leave the Chinese people with less access to information, less contact with the democratic world, and more resistance from their government to outside influence and ideas. No one could possibly benefit from that except for the most rigid, anti-democratic elements in China itself. Let's not give them a victory by locking China out of the WTO. The question is not whether or not this trade agreement will cure serious and disturbing issues of economic and political freedom in China; the issue is whether it will push things in the right direction. I believe it will.

WTO membership will strengthen the forces of reform inside China and thereby improve the odds that China will continue and even accelerate its gradual progress toward joining the rules-based community of nations. In the last 20 years, the Chinese have made giant strides in building a new economy, lifting more than 200 million people out of absolute poverty and creating the basis for more profound reform of Chinese society. But tens of millions of peasants continue to migrate from the countryside, where they see no future, to the city, where not all find work. China's economic growth has slowed just when it needs to be rising to create jobs for the unemployed. That is one reason the WTO agreement is a win-win for both nations. China faces critical social and economic challenges in the next few years; WTO membership will spur the economy and, over time, will help establish the conditions to sustain and deepen economic reform in China.

In the past, the Chinese state was employer, landlord, shopkeeper and news-provider all rolled into one. This agreement obligates China to deepen its market reforms, empowering leaders who want their country to move further and faster toward economic freedom. It will expose China to global economic competition and thereby bring China under ever more pressure to privatize its state-owned industry and accelerate a process that is removing the government from vast areas of China's economic life. The agreement will also give Chinese as well as foreign businesses freedom to import and export on their own and sell products without going through government middlemen. And in opening China's telecommunications market, including to Internet and satellite services, the agreement will expose the Chinese people to information, ideas and debate from around the world. As China's people become more mobile, prosperous, and aware of alternative ways of life, they will seek greater say in the decisions that affect their lives.

The agreement obliges the Chinese government to publish laws and regulations and subjects pertinent decisions to review of an international body. That will strengthen the rule of law in China and increase the likelihood that it will play by global rules as well. It will advance our larger interest in bringing China into international agreements and institutions that can make it a more constructive player in the world, with a stake in preserving peace and stability, instead of reverting to the status of a brooding giant at the edge of the community of nations.

Many courageous proponents of change in China agree. Martin Lee, the leader of Hong Kong's Democratic Party, says that "the participation of China in the WTO would . . . serve to bolster those in China who understand that the country must embrace the rule of law." Chinese dissident Ren Wanding said upon the agreement's completion: "Before, the sky was black; now it is light. This can be a new beginning."

As I have argued to China's leaders many times, China will be less likely to succeed if its people cannot exchange information freely; if it does not build the legal and political foundation to compete for global capital; if its political system does not gain the legitimacy that comes from democratic choice. This agreement will encourage the Chinese to move in the right direction.

The Importance of Permanent Normal Trade Relations

In order to accede to the WTO, China must still complete a number of bilateral negotiations, notably with the EU and others, and also conclude multilateral negotiations in the WTO Working Party. These negotiations are proceeding.

The United States must grant China permanent NTR or risk losing the full benefits of the agreement we negotiated, including special import protections, and rights to enforce China's commitments through WTO dispute settlement. If Congress were to refuse to grant permanent NTR, our Asian and European competitors will reap these benefits but American farmers and businesses may well be left behind.

In sum, it lies not only in our economic interest to grant China permanent NTR status. We must do it to encourage China along the path of domestic reform, human rights, the rule of law and international cooperation. In the months ahead, I look forward to working with Congress to pass this historic legislation.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks on the Fiscal Year 2001 Federal Budget and an Exchange With Reporters

January 25, 2000

The President. Hello.

Q. Good morning.

The President. I think it's just afternoon. [*Laughter*] I'm glad you all got here; I thought school was canceled today. [*Laughter*]

Seven years ago, when I came to Washington, our Nation was burdened with a $290 billion annual deficit, and our national debt had quadrupled in 12 years. Interest rates were high and growth was low. Vice President Gore and I set our Nation on a new path of fiscal responsibility, opening markets, investing in our people and new technologies. We passed strong deficit reduction packages in both 1993 and in 1997 and made tough choices in each and every budget. This put the Nation on a course of fiscal discipline, while continuing to invest in our people and our future.

Last year I asked the Congress to use every single dollar of our Social Security surplus to pay down the debt and to use the interest savings from that debt reduction to lengthen the life of Social Security.

Now we see the results of the last 7 years: the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years; last year's surplus of $124 billion, the largest in our history. The latest numbers from the Treasury indicate the surplus for this year will be even larger. In just the last 2 years, we've already paid down $140 billion of the national debt. Through unprecedented

debt buybacks in the last few weeks, we're able to finance the debt on the most favorable possible terms.

Over the last 2 years, there have been repeated efforts to push us off the path of fiscal discipline, with large and irresponsible tax cuts. Because we've resisted these efforts, our debt is $1.7 trillion less this year than it was projected to be back in 1993. Now is not the time to let up on a strategy that is plainly working.

Today I am announcing that because of the choices we have made, the budget I will submit for 2001 accelerates the date that we will be able to pay off our debt to 2013, 2 years earlier than we had originally planned. We will do this by protecting Social Security funds and dedicating the interest savings to Social Security, allowing us, in addition to paying off the debt, to extend the solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund to 2050.

We will also be able to make Medicare secure now, through 2025. And we will be debt-free for the first time since 1835, when our Nation just had 24 States and fewer than 15 million people. Our children and their children will not inherit the crippling burden of interest payments that we faced 7 years ago.

What does this mean for Americans in their daily lives? Already, the debt reduction means that American families pay, on average, $2,000 less per year on their home mortgages, $200 less on a loan for school or for a car. This new initiative will help even more with loans and credit card payments. Debt reduction helps everyone by getting the Government out of competition for loans, which makes interest rates lower overall. More investment, more jobs, higher wages for Americans result.

It makes us much more competitive in the global economy, and less vulnerable to shocks elsewhere. It helps other nations which really need to borrow the money to get their economies going, and, in turn, they will be better trade partners with us.

All of this is good news. But as I have said over and over again, there is no room for complacency. We got here by making hard choices and sticking to a strategy that works—that builds opportunity and reinforces responsibility.

I remain committed to that strategy. I ask the Republican majority in Congress to put politics aside and join me. We've got so much work to do in the weeks ahead to make sure that we seize this historic opportunity.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

I also, before I take your questions, and because of the remarkable weather you can see outside, would like to say just a word about relief for the thousands of families that are struggling with increased heating bills and cold this winter. We've been monitoring the situation daily, and based on the most recent data it is clear that a release of emergency funds from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is warranted. Therefore, today I am directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to expedite the release of LIHEAP funds to Alaska and States in the Northeast which have experienced the greatest hardship. These funds will help keep more American families safe and warm this winter, and we'll get them out there just as quickly as we possibly can.

Q. How much?

The President. I don't know yet. We're working on it. We'll put it out as quick as we know.

FY 2001 Federal Budget

Q. Mr. President, why isn't it right for the next President and the next Congress to put forward such a long-term plan as you're doing today?

The President. Why isn't it right?

Q. Yes, why shouldn't—Senator Lott says it ought to be for the next President and the next Congress to do programs like this. This is a very long-term initiative that you're putting forward today.

The President. You mean the debt relief?

Q. That's exactly right.

The President. Well, I think they ought to follow it. But you've got to understand, even if we commit to this path, since every year the Congress will meet, they'll have to recommit to it. But it will be much easier—what we could do is derail them. If we had

adopted, for example, the tax cut last year, we would have stopped that.

What we're doing, by taking this position, is maximizing the choices that the next Congress and the next President will have. Except—on the Social Security thing, on debt relief. On Social Security, what I propose will take Social Security from 2034 to 2050. That is well beyond the life of most baby boomers. I would like to take it out 75 years. But I presume, based on what happened last year, that we won't be able to get enough bipartisan agreement to do that. So there will be plenty for the next President and the next Congress to do.

And they will have to do that, because the life expectancy is going to go up so exponentially. And we've already gotten Medicare out 25 years—keep in mind, Medicare was projected to go broke last year, when I took office. Now we've got it out to 2025. I think that it is appropriate to add the voluntary prescription drug benefit, and to take it out a little further by taking some of the reforms that all of us apparently agree on, based on the Medicare Commission that had heavy involvement by Senate Republicans and Democrats. And the Finance Committee's going to take that up. So there will be plenty for America to do next year and the years beyond. There always will be.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Iowa Caucuses

Q. Mr. President, what do you—what's your read on the results from Iowa? Were you surprised by the margins on both the Democratic and the Republican side? Can you give us your take?

The President. Well, I think the Republican race was about as I thought it would be, and I think that the Vice President had a terrific victory last night in Iowa. And I think all the more impressive because he and Senator Bradley, I thought, both ran very substantive campaigns, very idea-oriented campaigns, and had that whole series of debates, which I think served the people very well. And I think he should be very proud of that, his strong effort. And I was very pleased to see that. But I don't have any real analysis of what happened in the insides of either one of the campaigns because I didn't follow it that closely.

Q. Well, you've been through this. I mean, as they go into New Hampshire, how does it affect the dynamic there?

The President. I think it's a plus, but I agree with what the Vice President said last night, it's important not to overread it. The people of New Hampshire are very independent. They want to make a good choice. They understand that to some extent the choice they make affects the choices that the country has after the New Hampshire primary. And I think that you'll see all the candidates there really bearing down and trying to reach the voters, which is what they ought to do.

Elian Gonzalez

Q. Mr. President, are you inclined to sign or veto any possible bill out of Congress that would grant Elian Gonzalez U.S. citizenship? And do you think it was a good idea for the two grandmothers to come here to meet with Congress, or are you concerned that might further politicize the process as you—[*inaudible*].

The President. Well, first, I have done my best, as all of you know, to handle this in a nonpolitical way and to make the judgments for which the law provides. The judgment that the law provides for the INS to make is whether the father can properly be declared the guardian of the child, since the mother was, unfortunately, killed.

And the case is now in court, and I would like to see—at a minimum, I would like to see this court case played out before the Congress takes action. I think we ought to try to let the legal system take its course.

I understand that the strong feelings that exist in this country about the Castro government complicates this. And I know that that little boy has some relatives in this country who feel very strongly about that. And I guess his grandmothers, in coming up here, were reacting to what they thought about the extent to which the case had already been politicized.

More than anything else, I wish that somehow—I mean, no one can really know for sure, I suppose, what terrible and probably

not fully conscious burdens that child has already sustained because he lost his mother and because now he's being competed for in a way that is unusual for a 6-year-old child. And I know that—maybe it's just because I'm not running for anything, but I just somehow wish that whatever is best for this child could be done. And I know there are people who genuinely disagree about that, because plainly he would have more economic opportunity in this country. But all the evidence indicates that his father genuinely loved him and spent a great deal of time with him back in Cuba.

So I think that—you know, what I have tried to do is to set up a circumstance where the people who were in a position to know the most and be the least influenced by whatever the political considerations are would at least have the maximum opportunity to wind up doing what was right for the child. I hope that somehow we can still find a way to do that.

Q. For better or worse though—if I could follow up—for better or worse, though, politics is a reality in this situation.

The President. Yes, it is.

Q. Could you possibly veto any bill that would grant Elian Gonzalez U.S. citizenship?

The President. I have not decided what to do, and I wouldn't rule that out. I just haven't decided what to do.

Let me just say for the moment, if you take it out of the combustible, emotional nature of our relationship with Cuba and particularly the Cuban-American community in south Florida's relationship with Cuba, and you think about the issue, one of the things that I think we all need to think about is this could happen again. I mean, this sort of thing could happen again because you have so many people coming to our shores from all these different countries, and then shifting governments, shifting policies within countries. And what we do need is an analysis of whether we have the tools to maximize the chance that the kids involved and the families involved will be treated fairly, based on the merits of, particularly, the best interests of the child.

And I think, again—I'm happy to talk to anybody about this and really try to think this through. I'm just trying to minimize the politics of it, because I think if you take this one decision out of context—it's not just Cuba, and it's not just this little boy—there are likely to be a lot of these things in the future as immigration flows increases, upheavals increase elsewhere, and as we know more and more about what goes on in other countries.

This is something that ought to be thought about. But in my—I suppose I have tended to think of this child more from a point of view of a parent than anything else, and I wish I knew more about the facts even than I do, because I just—this poor kid has already lost his mother, and whatever happens, I'm sure he's going to carry certain burdens into his early adolescence that most of us did not carry. And somehow, whatever happens, I just hope it turns out to be best for him. He's a beautiful child.

Yes.

2000 Election

Q. Mr. President, in his victory statement yesterday, Governor Bush seemed to be throwing down the gauntlet against you. He seemed to be kicking off his major campaign against you. What do you have to say about that, and do you have a rebuttal? Are you going to do anything about it?

The President. Well, I have, I guess, two responses. One is, this campaign is between the candidates and the American people, and they will evaluate all claims and charges, and they usually get it right. That's why we're all still around here, after 224 years. They almost always get it right. And so I'm going to leave most of that to them.

Now, it is an unusual claim that we ought to somehow reject an approach that has given us the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest unemployment, welfare, and crime rolls in 30 years, not to mention the benefits of the family and medical leave law and the Brady law, which were vetoed in the previous administration. And I agree that the tax program he's proposed might well undo a lot of that, and he can make the claim that that's the basis on which the campaign ought to proceed. But I don't really want to get into an argument with him. He ought to—I think that ought to be something between him and the other candidates and the American people.

But I do think it's an unusual thing to say that what we really ought to do is change what has given us an unprecedented level not just of economic prosperity but of social progress and social cohesion, restored credibility of Government, proof that ideas really can matter to move the people forward. I think that that's a pretty hard argument to make.

FY 2001 Federal Budget

Q. Mr. President, what's your projected surplus for the new budget, and doesn't that allow room for at least a modest tax cut?

The President. Well, yes. First of all, I'm not—you will see—I think the Congressional Budget Office, I believe, when they're going to propose what they think, I think they will show you what the difficulty here is, because my understanding is, they're going to give you options. They will show you—that is, they'll show you—like every projected surplus, it depends on what you think the so-called baseline is.

We believe that there has been greater growth, and there will be a larger surplus than we thought. But we believe—and I intend to propose, as I did last time, a set of tax cuts that I think are targeted to the middle class, targeted to sustain our economic growth, targeted to help lower income people and areas move into the middle class, that will keep America's economic expansion going.

But I think the most important thing—I will say again, the most important thing is to keep our fiscal discipline—to keep paying down the debt, to get the country out of debt, to keep the interest rates down. Keep in mind, this is saving the average family $2,000 a year on home mortgage costs. We're—next month, we'll have the longest economic expansion in history, and long-term interest rates are lower now than they were in the bad economy of 1991—I mean, 1992. They're lower.

So, yes we can have tax cuts. And yes, every year, and including next year, when I'm not here, and the years ahead, we can evaluate what the situation is. But I do not believe we should have very big tax cuts that will explode in the second 5 years of a 10-year period, and that ignore what the real investment needs of the country will be.

And that's what I mean by this so-called baseline. You know, to use the '97 baseline and spending caps, when they were totally shredded last year, as a basis for estimating how you should spend everything else on a tax cut, means you're going to get back in deficit problems—just for example.

So yes, we can have a tax cut. It ought to be modest; it ought to be targeted; it ought to be in the context of fiscal discipline. It ought not to explode in the second 5 years in a much bigger trajectory than it takes in the first 5 years.

And again I say—one of you mentioned about decisions that could be made in the years ahead—you can always make those decisions—if things keep getting better, then you can do more. But you should always do it with an eye, in my judgment, toward conservative economic policies and toward always understanding that those things are easy to do, but they're difficult to undo if times get tough.

Yes.

Indian Airlines Flight 814 Hijacking

Q. Mr. President, do you now have reason to believe that the Pakistani Government may have been involved in that airplane hijacking?

The President. No, we don't. We do not, no. I guess the simplest thing I can tell you is that we do not have evidence that the Pakistani Government was in any way involved in that hijacking; we don't.

State of the Union Address

Q. Mr. President, on the State of the Union, we know how pumped up you get for the State of the Union, and I was wondering, considering that this is your last one, whether there's also a sense of bittersweet, that it's a bittersweet moment, too.

The President. No, it's not bittersweet; it's nostalgic. One of the wonderful Navy stewards who works for me said this morning, he said, "I can't believe we've been doing this for 7 years." [*Laughter*] And the time flies when it's a busy time, and you're absorbed—excuse me—absorbed in what you're doing.

I don't feel bittersweet; I do feel some nostalgia. And I think it's something I'm very much trying to fight off, because I think the important thing is to keep the attention of the country focused on the future, and to keep my attention and the attention of the administration focused on the future, and the energy level very high. So I am working with that in mind, and I've worked very hard on the speech, and I'm still working on it.

Bipartisanship on the Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, you have a long list of things that you'd like to do. You've been rolling them out for the last couple weeks. There are things that weren't done last year. Realistically, what are the chances of any real bipartisan agreements with the Republican Congress?

The President. I think that we have some significant chance of getting some of the substantive issues through—the Patients' Bill of Rights, the minimum wage, the gun reforms, the Brady background checks at the gun shows. I think that there is a better than 50–50 chance that a lot of the investments I have recommended will eventually prevail. And I am immensely hopeful about the new markets initiative, which is more than twice as big in this budget as it was last time, largely because there is a lot of bipartisan support for it, beginning with the Speaker of the House. So I'm very, very hopeful.

You know, there's a part of that that has a special initiative for the Mississippi Delta, I believe, Senator Lott will support. So I'm hopeful. I'm going to do everything I can to get as much done as I can for the American people, and I'm quite hopeful.

Super Bowl XXXIV

Q. Mr. President, we think we know how the Vice President feels, but what's your pick for the Super Bowl and why? [*Laughter*]

The President. He can say and get in no trouble, can't he, because he's from Tennessee. I'm not going to pick one. But I'll tell you this—I've followed it this year very closely. There were two great games last Sunday. And what I thought was going to happen 2 weeks ago I'm no longer so sure will.

Q. Can you say what?

The President. I don't think you can tell which one of them will win. You've got one that's a very powerful defensive team, Tennessee, with a capacity for real offense. And then you've got the most powerful offensive team playing against them, that was stymied last Sunday and played better defense than I thought they could. So I don't think you can predict which one of them is going to win this race.

Q. Will you send a play to one of the coaches? [*Laughter*]

The President. Would I what?

Q. Send a play to one of the coaches?

The President. No, I think they're perfectly capable of doing that without me. That's kind of like this campaign, you all want to get me involved in it, but I think the Vice President, Senator Bradley, Governor Bush, and Senator McCain, they can all do this without me. They're doing fine.

Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign

Q. Is your wife going to win?

The President. I think so. I think she's done a good job with this, and she's getting into it. I certainly hope she does. I think it will be a good thing for New York and a good thing for our country.

Colombia

Q. Mr. President, in regards to the Colombian aid package, are you worried at all about sending arms down to a country who is now in a civil war and there's no real guarantee about who will be in power even in the next 3, 4 years?

The President. Well, I wouldn't go that far. I think, for one thing, we want to try to preserve and strengthen democracy in Colombia. It's a very old democracy that's under the greatest stress perhaps in its history. And there's always a risk when you go out on a limb to try to save a neighbor and help people to help themselves that it won't work.

But I think that—I believe the risks and the investment is something that we ought to do. And again, I believe that there will be significant bipartisan support here. I'd be surprised if we don't have large numbers of Republicans and Democrats supporting this. And I think we're going into this with our eyes wide open.

One of the things that we have to do is to try to help them gain some measure of control over their own country again. And if you look at Colombia, in the sort of the intersection of the narcotraffickers and the political rebels, you see a picture of what you might see much more of in the 21st century world, with sort of the enemies of nation-states forming networks of support across national borders and across otherwise discrete interests, like narcotraffickers, organized criminals, and political terrorists, weapons dealers.

So this will be an interesting test run for what I predict to you not only our Nation but others in our position will have to face over the next two decades. And it is something, again, I'm going to work very hard to build a bipartisan consensus on this and take this out of politics, because I believe that this is not only something we should do for our friend and neighbor in the country that is either the production or transit point for about 80 percent of the cocaine that gets dumped in this country; but also, if you will, a test run for the kind of challenges that my successors and our people will face in the years ahead.

Thank you.

Iowa Caucuses

Q. Did you miss being in Iowa? I'll bet you did.

The President. A little bit. I did. I love it there. They've been good to me. But I was interested in it. It's interesting to me to watch it unfold and watch how the decisions they make—which is why I don't want you guys to get me into it. This should be their campaigns, and they should make the decisions. And we should trust the people. They'll get it right. They always do.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator Bill Bradley; Elian Gonzalez, rescued off the coast of Florida on November 25, 1999; Juan Gonzalez, Mariela Gonzalez, and Raquel Rodriquez, Elian's father and grandmothers; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas. Indian Airlines Flight 814, from Kathmandu to New Delhi, was hijacked on December 24, 1999.

Interview With Jim Lehrer of PBS' "NewsHour"

January 26, 2000

State of the Union

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, welcome.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Lehrer. Can we assume, sir, that tomorrow night in the State of the Union you're going to declare the state of the Union to be in pretty good shape?

The President. It's in good shape. And I'm very grateful. But I'm also going to challenge the Congress and the country to make it better.

Mr. Lehrer. The things that are good about this country right now, how much of that do you believe you deserve credit for?

The President. Well, I think most of the credit, as always, goes to the American people. This is a country where citizenship is the most important job anybody can have. And I think we should start with that. I think the Members of Congress who are working with us deserve a lot of credit. But if you look at where we are now, compared to where we were 7 years ago, I think the fact that we got rid of the deficit and are running surpluses; the fact that we changed the philosophy of the National Government on welfare, on crime; the fact that we have formed unprecedented partnerships with people in the private sector to deal with all kinds of social problems—teen pregnancy, which is down, adoptions, which are up—the fact that we have protected more land than any administration in the country's history, except those of the two Roosevelts—I think that those things are things that our Government did.

I also believe that people have a lot more confidence now, that we can actually do things as a nation. In '92 we didn't just have economic distress and social decline. We had this political gridlock and discredited Government. The national Republicans have badmouthed the Government for 12 years, and they'd done a pretty good job of convincing America that it couldn't do anything. Now we have cut the size of Government by over 350,000. It's the smallest it's been since John Kennedy was here, and it really

works to empower people and to create these partnerships.

So I think that we have played a role in the recovery of the economy and in the improvement of the situation with crime, with welfare, with education. We've opened the doors of college to virtually all Americans. And I think all these things count for something. And of course, our country has been a great force for peace and freedom around the world. And I'm very grateful for the chance to—all of us—to serve here.

President's Historical Legacy

Mr. Lehrer. Do you believe that history is going to give you credit for all those things you've just enumerated?

The President. Well, I think that's up to the historians. I think that history will be very much—that people who do serious histories of this administration will be amazed at the amount of energy and effort that went into the wide variety of areas that we worked in. And I think that it will show that in virtually every area we had progress, from helping to reduce poverty to improving the plight of our children, to creating an environment with the reform of telecommunications, the reform of banking, and getting rid of the deficit and major investments in science and technology, to this exploding new economy.

I think that it will show that we helped America to make this major transition into a new economy and an era of globalization.

Mr. Lehrer. Are you worried about what the historians are going to write about you?

The President. No, I can't control that. But I think time will tend to accelerate the positive and put what negative there is into proper perspective. And I feel quite comfortable about that. But the main thing is, I don't think too much about it because I know that the only thing I can do to impact on it is to do the right thing today by the American people.

I mean, my philosophy has been, ever since I got here, is that in the modern political world, the most important thing you can do is get up and go to work and concentrate on your job and always keep thinking about tomorrow. And all the pressures that operate on you are designed to prevent you from doing that, to hobble you, to distract you, to divide you, to get you to obsess about what somebody said or wrote or is doing.

And so my whole theory has been from the beginning that if we could start and give, first 4 years and then 8 years, of unbridled, concentrated effort, no matter what else happened, the American people would be all right. And that's really all I hired on to do, is to try to help them do better.

Mr. Lehrer. Let me read what the New York Times said in its lead editorial on Monday. They're talking about you, your legacy, and your Presidency as you go into this last year. It said, "historians are beginning to categorize Mr. Clinton as a politician of splendid natural talent and some significant accomplishments who, nonetheless, missed the greatness that once seemed within his grasp." What's your reaction to that "what might have been" kind of thing?

The President. I think that—well, first of all, I think it's not productive to talk about what might have been. But I think if you—the question is how you keep score, what is this time like, how will you measure it? The time that this is most like is the turn of the last century. Did we manage the transition of America in the new economy and an era of globalization well, or not? I think the answer is, we did. Did we make social progress? Did we actually change the way we approach social issues? If the issue is crime, welfare, national service, the answer is, we did. Were we good stewards of the environment? We were.

And then, what were the forces you stood against, and what did you stop? And if you look at the forces we stood against from 1994 forward and what we stopped, I think the answer is, what we did was, A, successful, and B, good for America. And then, did we work with contending forces when we could to reach common agreement? I think the answer is, we did. So I believe that, first of all, there is no such thing as history, because this is still going on. We shouldn't worry about that. You know, in 5 years, 10 years, 20 years—I got a book the other day on President Nixon's Presidency, and then I got one a week afterward on President Kennedy's Presidency that are still being written.

I just read a new book, a great book, on Theodore Roosevelt's Presidency. And I think the further away you get from it, the more perspective you get and the more you're able to look at all the evidence.

So frankly, my view is not much better than the New York Times' on this. Neither one of us really can properly evaluate how this will be viewed in the light of history. I think that we have, given what we could have accomplished within the framework of possibility that was there and the job that was there before us, I think we've done pretty well. But all I can tell you is, I've worked every day, and I did the best I could, and I'm going to let the historians make their judgment after I give it one more hard year.

President's Agenda for Last Year in Office

Mr. Lehrer. Let's talk about the one more hard year. Is there one particular thing that you really want to do before you leave this office?

The President. Well, there are many things that I really want to do before I leave this office. Obviously, I'm still heavily engaged in the search for peace in the Middle East. But whether we can do that or not depends——

Mr. Lehrer. What's the problem there, Mr. President? Particularly Syria and Israel, what's the problem?

The President. I think the main problem is they haven't talked in a long time; there's still a fair measure of distrust; and the decisions that have to be made will require of both parties actions which will cause difficulty for them with some constituencies in their country.

But let me say, I'm convinced that both the leaders of Syria and Israel want peace, and I'm convinced that substantively they're not that far apart. So we have a chance to do that.

But you asked me what I wanted to do. That's something I would like to be involved in if they want to do it. I'm prepared to do whatever I can.

I want to continue to do everything I can to protect the natural treasures of this country. I want to lay the foundation for America dealing with climate change. I want to lay the foundation for America dealing with what I think will be the biggest security challenges of the 21st century.

I believe—you know, all the attention today is on whether we can develop a missile defense and, if so, whether we can deploy it without falling out with the Russians and our friends and other countries who question this. But the likeliest threat, in my view, is brought on by the intersection of technology and the likelihood that you'll have terrorists and narcotraffickers and organized criminals cooperating with each other, with smaller and smaller and more difficult to detect weapons of mass destruction and powerful traditional weapons. So we've tried to lay in a framework for dealing with cyberterrorism, bioterrorism, chemical terrorism. This is very important. Now, this is not in the headlines, but I think it's very, very important for the next 10 or 20 years. I think the enemies of the nation-state in this interconnected world are likely to be the biggest security threat.

And then, of course, you know the things that are really close to my heart: I'm going to try to get a lot done in education, in health care, in bringing opportunity to poor people and reducing poverty in this country.

Health Care

Mr. Lehrer. What about health care? What is it that you would like your legacy to be on health care?

The President. Well, I wish I could have given health insurance to all Americans, because I still think it's inexcusable that we are the only advanced country in the world that doesn't do that. But I feel good about many of the things we have done, in medical research, in letting people keep their health insurance when they change jobs, in providing much more preventive screening for older people with illnesses or potential illnesses, and of course, in the Children's Health Insurance Program.

So I'm going to focus now on what I think I can get done this year. I want to try to increase the number of people with health insurance dramatically by letting the parents of children in the Children's Health Insurance Program buy into it, by letting people between the ages of 55 and 65 buy into Medicare. And I want to have another big investment in biomedical research.

Education

Mr. Lehrer. What about education? What mark can you leave in this next year on education?

The President. First of all, if you look at what we have done—we've already helped almost all the States to develop higher standards. And we've got—test scores in reading, math, and college entrance exams are up.

Mr. Lehrer. And you feel you've done that? You feel the administration has done that?

The President. No, I—I think our administration has contributed to it. No, the people that did it were the kids and the parents and the teachers. But I think, consistent with our philosophy, which is to be a catalyst for new ideas and to be a partner to help people achieve it, there's no question we've had an impact.

Now, one thing we've had a really direct impact on is we've done more than any administration ever has to open the doors of college to everyone with big increases in Pell grants; the direct student loan program, which lets people borrow money at less cost and pay it off at a percentage of their income; we've got a million work-study grants; we've got AmeriCorps, 150,000 young people there; and the HOPE scholarship tax credit and the lifetime tax credit really means people have no excuse for not going to school.

Now, I have also proposed this time, for the first time in history, that we make college tuition tax deductible, up to $10,000 a year, which will mean that we have guaranteed access to 4 years of college for all Americans. I think that is a huge achievement. Since I became President, the number of—the percentage of high school graduates going to college has gone up to 67 percent. That's an increase of 10 percent. But we need for everybody to be able to go. And so I think that this will be a major achievement.

Now let's go back to the beginning. The next big challenge, besides making—this is the last piece, making college universally available. The next big challenge is to make sure that everybody's diploma means something. And we've been working on this all along, starting in early childhood, the increases we made in Head Start. We now have 1,000 colleges sending mentors into grade schools to make sure kids learn to read by the third grade. And I think we've increased the emphasis on that—you probably noticed that Jim Barksdale gave $100 million to the University of Mississippi, to do nothing but focus on how we can teach grade school kids to read. This is a huge deal; it's great.

So what else do we need to do? I think we need a national strategy to turn around failing schools or shut them down. I think we need to institutionalize reform with more charter schools. And I think we ought to make preschool available to everybody. And everybody that needs it ought to have access to after-school. I think if you get those things done, and we continue to train the teachers, especially in how to use the computers as you hook up all the schools to the Internet, I think you're going to see really big, continuing improvements in education.

Mr. Lehrer. But you can't do all that this next year, can you?

The President. Sure we can. We can—no, but we can take big steps toward it. If you look at the whole history of our country—I read something President Johnson said the other day, and he got through Medicare and the Medicaid and the first steps of major Federal aid to education. He talked about how most of our big progress comes in deliberate, discrete steps. And if you take enough steps in the right direction, you turn back around, you see you've come quite a long way.

So what I'm going to try to do in my speech tomorrow night is to outline what I think the long-term goals for the Nation in the 21st century should be and then what steps I think we can realistically hope to achieve in this year and urge the Congress to join me in them.

2000 Elections and President's Agenda

Mr. Lehrer. Now, you're doing this, of course, in a Presidential election year. In whose interest is it to help you do this, in terms of simple politics of getting it done, to help you improve your legacy or get things done before you leave office?

The President. Well, first of all, it's in none of their interest to help me improve my legacy. That's not why they should do it. It is in their interest to do the job they

were hired to do, which is to help the people they represent. And I think the people that they represent, whether Republicans or Democrats, would find it amazing that someone could suggest they ought to take a year off. I mean, anybody who wants to take a year off ought to give up their paycheck and say, "I'm sorry. I'm not going to work this year, but I'm not going to take your money."

Secondly, in a more mundane way, it is clearly in the interests of all the people in Congress to do things that are good for America, because the American people will appreciate it. I think it helps the Democrats, but I don't think the Republicans—I mean, a bunch of them have to run next time, too. And people are going to know—want to know, what did you do last year?

If you look, it's quite interesting. We had a very good year in '96, where I had to veto the welfare reform bill twice because the Republicans wouldn't agree with me to guarantee child care and health care and more nutrition and medical care and transportation for the welfare families. And then they did it at the end, and we got this big welfare reform. And now we've got 7 million fewer people on welfare. In '98 we passed a lot of very important legislation at the end, because it was election year.

So what you might see in terms of Congress now is not an enormous amount of activity at the beginning, although I do believe there's a good chance we can fairly early pass my proposal to help Colombia fight off narcotrafficking and preserve its democracy and work with its neighbors along the border. And I think there's a good chance they'll pass the China normal trade relations bill—I hope that's true—but I think at the end of the year, when people will be held accountable by the voters, I think there's a chance we'll get quite a lot done. We did in '96. We did in '98. I think we will this year.

Leadership Choice in 2000 Elections

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, what do you make of Governor Bush's comment the other night after he had won the caucuses in Iowa? He said, this is the beginning of the end of the Clinton era, and everybody in the room cheered.

The President. Well, they would. [*Laughter*] I think if he said that he would reverse what we were doing, I think he would. And I think that's the choice before the American people. I mean, he's offered a $1.4 billion tax cut. And the only thing I'd ask the American people is to remember, you know, we've now had 20 years of experience. We tried it their way for 12 years, and they quadrupled the national debt. And when I took office, we had high unemployment, a massive deficit, a huge debt, and totally neglected our domestic affairs. We had rising crime, rising welfare rolls, all the social indicators going the wrong way.

Now, we've tried it our way for 7 years. We've got the biggest surpluses in history, the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. We can get this country out of debt now in 13 years—out of debt for the first time since Andy Jackson was President in 1835. And all the social indicators are going in the right direction.

So it seems to me that he was being honest with the people, that he said that he will reverse this course. And I do think the American people ought to vote for change in this election, because things are changing so fast around us in this globalized world, we have to keep changing. The issue is: Are we going to build on what works or revert to what didn't. That's what I think the issue is.

Mr. Lehrer. You've given kind of your definition of the Clinton era, and he has his. Now, what he is—the interpretation of what he's talking about is that it's just a continuation of what all the Presidential candidates have mentioned to some degree, that Republicans like Governor Bush, more than the Democrats, but even Vice President Gore and Senator Bradley have said about returning the Presidency back to a nobler office, to words like promising to restore dignity and respectability, decency, and trust to the Presidency. They're talking about you, aren't they, Mr. President?

The President. Well, first of all, I made one mistake. I apologized for it. I paid a high price for it, and I've done my best to atone for it by being a good President. But I believe we also endured what history will clearly record was a bogus investigation, where there was nothing to Whitewater and nothing to

these other charges, and they were propagated, and tens of millions of dollars were spent, and we got a clean bill of health on that.

And in terms of trust, let me just tell you a story. I went back to New Hampshire for the seventh anniversary of the New Hampshire primary in 1991—or the eighth anniversary, excuse me, last year, in 1992—so it was the seventh anniversary. I went back there last year. And it was raining, and there were children standing in the rain, and people standing in the rain. And the thing that meant the most to me—not the Democratic Party event, just going around, because they heard the campaign in the most detail—was people saying, you know, "We're so much better off now, but the thing that really matters is, you did exactly what you said you would do."

And it seems to me that all of us in life, we can spend all of our time pointing our finger at other people and saying we're better than they are, or we can work as hard as we can on our own character, on our own lives. And if we're in public life, we need to tell people what we're going to do and then we need to do it. And if we don't do it, it ought to be because we tried and couldn't.

I think that's what people know about me and this administration. We laid out the most detailed set of commitments anybody ever had in '92. We've accomplished virtually everything we set out to do. What we haven't accomplished, we tried and failed to accomplish. And even there, in the health care area, we made a lot of progress. And people know that.

So I'm satisfied that the American people will make a judgment in this election based on what's best for them and their families, on whatever factors they choose. They're in control again. We're back into the biggest job interview in the whole world. And whatever they decide and however they decide it, I think they'll get it right. They nearly always do.

Mr. Lehrer. Do you get angry, though, when somebody like Alan Keyes said recently, "We are coming to the end of the most disgraceful, the most immoral Presidency in the history of this country"?

The President. No, because he's a far rightwinger who probably thought Iran-Contra was a good thing for America. And you know, there's just no evidence to support it. I mean, you know—so it doesn't make me mad at all. How could you take that seriously? This is about—one of the things that I had to learn when I moved to Washington is, before I ever got angry at anything anybody said, was to ask myself whether it was about the subject they were discussing, or whether it was really about power.

And I remember once, I had a conversation with a Republican Senator in the middle of the D'Amato hearings, when he was trying to convince people, or at least the Republican Senators were, that my wife had done something wrong in this Whitewater thing, which was totally absurd. And so I asked this Senator, I said, "Do you think either one of us did anything wrong? Not illegal, just wrong, even wrong?" And he started laughing. He said, "You've got to be kidding." He said, "Of course you didn't do anything wrong. That's not the purpose of this. The purpose of this is to convince the American people you did. It's all about power."

Now, I made a mistake. I acknowledged it. I've done my best to atone for it. But all this broad-brush stuff, you know, people see that for what it is. And when I'm criticized now, I try to remember Benjamin Franklin's admonition that our critics are our friends, for they show us our faults. So, you know, I'm just trying to be a better person and a better President every day. I don't know what else to do. And I'm trying not to let this stuff get in the way.

Again let me say, the job of a President is to have a vision and a strategy and pursue it; to show up every day and, insofar as possible, to think about the American people and their welfare, and to not think about himself. The environment in which a President operates is designed to prevent him from doing that—as much as possible, to make him torn up and upset, full of recriminations and anger, and have his attention divided.

So what I've tried to do is to create a frame of mind and a climate around here with our people, so we could do our job. I hope I've

succeeded. I think the results think for themselves.

Impeachment

Mr. Lehrer. Difficult question, a matter of history that I feel compelled to ask you, Mr. President. We sat, you and I, 2 years ago almost to the day, and it was the day that the Monica Lewinsky story broke in the Washington Post and the Los Angeles Times. And you denied that you had had an improper sexual relationship with Ms. Lewinsky. In retrospect, if you had answered that differently right at the beginning, not only just my question but all those questions at the beginning, do you think there would have been a different result and that, in fact, you might not even have been impeached?

The President. I don't know. I don't know. I just don't know. I wish I knew the answer to that, but I don't. But the thing I regret most, except for doing the wrong thing, is misleading the American people about it. I do not regret the fact that I fought the independent counsel. And what they did was, in that case and generally, was completely overboard. And now rational retrospectives are beginning to come out where people that have no connection to me talking about what an abuse of power it was and what a threat to the American system it was. And I'm glad that our people stuck with me, and that the American people stuck with me, and I was able to resist what it was they attempted to do.

But I do regret the fact that I wasn't straight with the American people about it. It was something I was ashamed of and pained about, and I regret that.

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Mr. Lehrer. There was another interview that we did before that, in which I asked you if you agreed with Susan McDougal that Kenneth Starr was out to get you. And your answer was interpreted by Mr. Starr and others that, "well, the facts speak for themselves," is what you said. There have been many facts since then. That interview was even before 2 years ago. Do you think the facts have spoken on that?

The President. Oh, absolutely. I mean, it's not even close anymore. Everybody knows what the deal was. And more and more, there will be people who didn't have a vested interest in trying to promote some view they had previously taken who will evaluate this and come to the same conclusion.

And as I said, even though I'm sorry about what I did and sorry about the developments there, I really felt, once the last chapter of this played out, that I was defending the Constitution and the Presidency. And I feel that more strongly today.

I think they knew for a long time there was nothing to Whitewater. They knew it was a bunch of bull. They had no evidence. In fact, if even the law we had, or the one we had before the independent counsel law had been in place, there never would have been a special counsel because it didn't meet the standard. The only reason I agreed to ask Janet Reno to appoint one in the first place was I really believed that the people that were talking about it wanted to know the truth, and I knew that they'd just look into Whitewater and find out it was a big bunch of bull and go on. And what I found out was that a lot of the people who wanted it didn't want to know the truth. And they wanted somebody that could hang on until they could find something that they could find about me or Hillary.

But they knew for a long time. They knew before 1996 that there was nothing to it, which was why they had to get rid of Mr. Fiske and get Mr. Starr in there, so it would drag past the '96 election. And I think history will show that, too. So I'm relaxed about that, and I don't spend much time thinking about it.

Again, to me, I had to make amends to the American people, and to my family and to my friends and my administration. I've done my best to do that. Now, the only way I can do that is to just keep looking toward the future, to stay excited, to stay upbeat, and to stay focused. And that's what I'm trying to do.

Mr. Lehrer. Do you have moments, private moments, of pleasure and satisfaction knowing that if, in fact, there was a conspiracy to run you out of office, it didn't work, you're still sitting in the Oval Office?

The President. I don't spend much time thinking about it like that. You know, maybe

when I'm gone I will. I'm grateful that for whatever reason, my friends and my family stayed with me; the American people stayed with me. I believe I defended the Constitution against a serious threat. I'm sorry I did something wrong, which gave them an excuse to really go overboard. I'm very sorry about that. But mostly what I try to do is to focus on trying to be a better President, trying to be a better person, trying to be a better husband and father, just trying to do the things that I can do.

You know, you can't—none of us ever gets ahead in life, I don't think, by taking big satisfaction in victories or looking down on other people or keeping our anger pent up. One of the things I learned in this whole deal is you've got to let all that go. Life will always humble you if you give in to your anger or take some satisfaction that you defeated somebody or some satisfaction that, well, no matter how bad I am, at least I didn't do this, that, or the other thing. Life will always humble you. And I have just tried to be grateful and to keep serving and to just worry about myself and not think about other people—in terms of whether you're doing right or wrong. That's all I can do.

But I'm actually—what I feel every day is, I'm just happy. My family was all here at Christmas. We had this fabulous Christmas. My administration, I've been fortunate by having all these people stay with me. The ones that leave are going off to do exciting things. And we've got—I feel that when I took office, the country had so many problems in it—it's like we've turned it around now, and we're going in the right direction. And now we've got a chance to really dream big dreams for our children. And that's a great thing to be doing in your last year in office. It's great. And not only to dream those dreams but actually take some big steps toward achieving them. So I'm just happy. You know, I can't be mad or—it's hard for me to think about all that stuff. It just happened. I've come to terms with it, and I'm just trying to go on.

Post-Presidential Plans

Mr. Lehrer. When this next year is over, you'll leave office, and you'll be the youngest former President since Teddy Roosevelt. You'll be in your fifties. You'll still have a lot of time and energy. Are you worried about that at all, about staying connected?

The President. No, not at all. No, no, I'm so excited about it. I mean, I'm worried I'll have to go back to learning basic things. But I'm excited about that, too, driving a car, shopping for food, paying the bills when the house—the pipes freeze, all that kind of stuff. You've got to go back to living your life like an ordinary person. I think that's good.

But Theodore Roosevelt had an interesting life when he left office. And of course, I've said this many times; I think President Carter has basically set the standard for what Presidents should do in terms of his public service at home and around the world. And that shows you that there's just worlds of possibilities out there. I'm very excited about it.

There are all kinds of things that I'll have to do. Of course, I'll have to make a living, and I hope I'll have to make a living to support a wife who's continuing our family's tradition of public service. But——

Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign

Mr. Lehrer. Do you think she's going to win?

The President. I do, yes. I do.

Mr. Lehrer. Why? Why do you think so?

The President. Well, I think they're both very strong, formidable people and strong, formidable candidates. You know, you get all these elections, where you've got to badmouth one candidate to like another, and you'd think I'd certainly be there in the race involving my wife. But the truth is, the mayor and Hillary are both strong, formidable people. They have impressive achievements in their lives that relate to public service.

But I think that she's much better suited for the work of a Senator and this whole legislative process. And I think that the passions of her life, 30 years of work and achievement in education and health care and the challenges that children and families face, and the whole philosophy she has about community are more consistent with where New York is today and what they need in the future.

And so that's why I think she'll win, not because I think he's the bad guy or something, because I think they're both very

strong people, but I think that New York will believe, in the end, that what she represents and where she wants to go and what her skills are and what she knows and cares most about is a little closer to where they are than his whole approach. And I think she'll win.

So I'll have to worry about that. But once I figure out how to support my wife's public service—she supported mine for many years—and fulfill my other family obligations, I want to find a way, through the center I'm going to build in Arkansas, with my library and in other ways, to be a public servant. You don't have to be an elected official to be a public servant. You can be a servant in other ways. And I can help others and do things, and that's what I want to do.

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, thank you very much.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 3:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Jim Barksdale, president and chief executive officer, Netscape Communications Corp.; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; former Senator Bill Bradley, Democratic Presidential candidate; Republican Presidential candidate Alan Keyes; former Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato; Susan McDougal, Whitewater investigation defendant; former Independent Counsel Robert B. Fiske, Jr., and his successor, Kenneth Starr; and Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of Military Forces for Stabilization of Areas of the Former Yugoslavia Report

January 25, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of July 19, 1999, I provided further information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. Armed Forces to Bosnia and Herzegovina and other states in the region in order to participate in and support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led Stabilization Force (SFOR), which began its mission and assumed authority from the NATO-led Implementation Force on December 20, 1996. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia.

The U.N. Security Council authorized member states to continue SFOR for a period of 12 months in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1247 of June 18, 1999. The mission of SFOR is to provide a continued military presence in order to deter hostilities, stabilize and consolidate the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, contribute to a secure environment, and provide, within its means and capabilities, selective support to key areas and key civil implementation organizations.

The U.S. force contribution to SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the process of being reduced from approximately 6,200 to 4,600 personnel. In the second half of 1999, all NATO nations and 19 others, including Russia and Ukraine, have provided military personnel or other support to SFOR. Most U.S. forces are assigned to Multinational Division, North, centered around the city of Tuzla. In addition, approximately 1,500 U.S. military personnel are deployed to Hungary, Croatia, and Italy in order to provide logistical and other support to SFOR. The U.S. forces continue to support SFOR in efforts to apprehend persons indicted for war crimes. In the last 6 months, U.S. forces have sustained no combat-related fatalities.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive, and in accordance with various statutory authorities.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed about developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other states in the region. I will continue to consult closely with the Congress regarding our efforts to foster peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of

the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 27.

Memorandum on Delegation of Authority To Conduct Assessments and Promulgate Regulations on Public Access to Off-Site Consequence Analysis Information

January 27, 2000

Memorandum for the Attorney General, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget

Subject: Delegation of Authority to Conduct Assessments and Promulgate Regulations On Public Access to Off-Site Consequence Analysis Information

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, including section 112(r)(7)(H) of the Clean Air Act ("Act") (42 U.S.C. 7412(r)(7)(H)), as added by section 3 of the Chemical Safety Information, Site Security and Fuels Regulatory Relief Act (Public Law 106–40), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby delegate to:

(1) the Attorney General the authority vested in the President under section 112(r)(7)(H)(ii)(I)(aa) of the Act to assess the increased risk of terrorist and other criminal activity associated with the posting of off-site consequence analysis information on the Internet;

(2) the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the authority vested in the President under section 112(r)(7)(H)(ii)(I)(bb) of the Act to assess the incentives created by public disclosure of off-site consequence analysis information for reduction in the risk of accidental releases; and

(3) the Attorney General and the Administrator of EPA, jointly, the authority vested in the President under section 112(r)(7)(H)(ii)(II) of the Act to promulgate regulations, based on these assessments, governing the distribution of off-site consequence analysis information. These regulations, in proposed and final form, shall be subject to review and approval by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

The Administrator of EPA is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register.*

William J. Clinton

Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union

January 27, 2000

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, honored guests, my fellow Americans:

We are fortunate to be alive at this moment in history. Never before has our Nation enjoyed, at once, so much prosperity and social progress with so little internal crisis and so few external threats. Never before have we had such a blessed opportunity and, therefore, such a profound obligation to build the more perfect Union of our Founders' dreams.

We begin the new century with over 20 million new jobs; the fastest economic growth in more than 30 years; the lowest unemployment rates in 30 years; the lowest poverty rates in 20 years; the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates on record; the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years; and next month, America will achieve the longest period of economic growth in our entire history.

We have built a new economy.

And our economic revolution has been matched by a revival of the American spirit: crime down by 20 percent, to its lowest level in 25 years; teen births down 7 years in a row; adoptions up by 30 percent; welfare rolls cut in half to their lowest levels in 30 years.

My fellow Americans, the state of our Union is the strongest it has ever been.

As always, the real credit belongs to the American people. My gratitude also goes to those of you in this Chamber who have worked with us to put progress over partisanship.

Eight years ago, it was not so clear to most Americans there would be much to celebrate in the year 2000. Then our Nation was gripped by economic distress, social decline, political gridlock. The title of a best-selling book asked: "America: What Went Wrong?"

In the best traditions of our Nation, Americans determined to set things right. We restored the vital center, replacing outmoded ideologies with a new vision anchored in basic, enduring values: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, a community of all Americans. We reinvented Government, transforming it into a catalyst for new ideas that stress both opportunity and responsibility and give our people the tools they need to solve their own problems.

With the smallest Federal work force in 40 years, we turned record deficits into record surpluses and doubled our investment in education. We cut crime with 100,000 community police and the Brady law, which has kept guns out of the hands of half a million criminals.

We ended welfare as we knew it, requiring work while protecting health care and nutrition for children and investing more in child care, transportation, and housing to help their parents go to work. We've helped parents to succeed at home and at work with family leave, which 20 million Americans have now used to care for a newborn child or a sick loved one. We've engaged 150,000 young Americans in citizen service through AmeriCorps, while helping them earn money for college.

In 1992 we just had a roadmap. Today, we have results.

Even more important, America again has the confidence to dream big dreams. But we must not let this confidence drift into complacency. For we, all of us, will be judged by the dreams and deeds we pass on to our children. And on that score, we will be held to a high standard, indeed, because our chance to do good is so great.

My fellow Americans, we have crossed the bridge we built to the 21st century. Now, we must shape a 21st century American revolution of opportunity, responsibility, and community. We must be now, as we were in the beginning, a new nation.

At the dawn of the last century, Theodore Roosevelt said, "The one characteristic more essential than any other is foresight . . . it should be the growing Nation with a future that takes the long look ahead." So tonight, let us take our long look ahead and set great goals for our Nation.

To 21st century America, let us pledge these things: Every child will begin school ready to learn and graduate ready to succeed. Every family will be able to succeed at home and at work, and no child will be raised in poverty. We will meet the challenge of the aging of America. We will assure quality, affordable health care, at last, for all Americans.

We will make America the safest big country on Earth. We will pay off our national debt for the first time since 1835.* We will bring prosperity to every American community. We will reverse the course of climate change and leave a safer, cleaner planet. America will lead the world toward shared peace and prosperity and the far frontiers of science and technology. And we will become at last what our Founders pledged us to be so long ago: One Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

These are great goals, worthy of a great nation. We will not reach them all this year, not even in this decade. But we will reach them. Let us remember that the first American Revolution was not won with a single shot; the continent was not settled in a single year. The lesson of our history and the lesson of the last 7 years is that great goals are reached step by step, always building on our progress, always gaining ground.

Of course, you can't gain ground if you're standing still. And for too long this Congress has been standing still on some of our most pressing national priorities. So let's begin tonight with them.

Again, I ask you to pass a real Patients' Bill of Rights. I ask you to pass commonsense gun safety legislation. I ask you to pass campaign finance reform. I ask you to vote up or down on judicial nominations and other important appointees. And again, I ask you—I implore you to raise the minimum wage.

Now, 2 years ago—let me try to balance the seesaw here—[*laughter*]—2 years ago, as we reached across party lines to reach our first balanced budget, I asked that we meet our responsibility to the next generation by maintaining our fiscal discipline. Because we refused to stray from that path, we are doing

---

* White House correction.

something that would have seemed unimaginable 7 years ago. We are actually paying down the national debt. Now, if we stay on this path, we can pay down the debt entirely in just 13 years now and make America debt-free for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835.

In 1993 we began to put our fiscal house in order with the Deficit Reduction Act, which you'll all remember won passages in both Houses by just a single vote. Your former colleague, my first Secretary of the Treasury, led that effort and sparked our long boom. He's here with us tonight. Lloyd Bentsen, you have served America well, and we thank you.

Beyond paying off the debt, we must ensure that the benefits of debt reduction go to preserving two of the most important guarantees we make to every American, Social Security and Medicare. Tonight I ask you to work with me to make a bipartisan downpayment on Social Security reform by crediting the interest savings from debt reduction to the Social Security Trust Fund so that it will be strong and sound for the next 50 years.

But this is just the start of our journey. We must also take the right steps toward reaching our great goals. First and foremost, we need a 21st century revolution in education, guided by our faith that every single child can learn. Because education is more important than ever, more than ever the key to our children's future, we must make sure all our children have that key. That means quality pre-school and after-school, the best trained teachers in the classroom, and college opportunities for all our children.

For 7 years now, we've worked hard to improve our schools, with opportunity and responsibility, investing more but demanding more in turn. Reading, math, college entrance scores are up. Some of the most impressive gains are in schools in very poor neighborhoods.

But all successful schools have followed the same proven formula: higher standards, more accountability, and extra help so children who need it can get it to reach those standards. I have sent Congress a reform plan based on that formula. It holds States and school districts accountable for progress and rewards them for results. Each year, our National Government invests more than $15 billion in our schools. It is time to support what works and stop supporting what doesn't.

Now, as we demand more from our schools, we should also invest more in our schools. Let's double our investment to help States and districts turn around their worst-performing schools or shut them down. Let's double our investments in after-school and summer school programs, which boost achievement and keep people off the streets and out of trouble. If we do this, we can give every single child in every failing school in America—everyone—the chance to meet high standards.

Since 1993, we've nearly doubled our investment in Head Start and improved its quality. Tonight I ask you for another $1 billion for Head Start, the largest increase in the history of the program.

We know that children learn best in smaller classes with good teachers. For 2 years in a row, Congress has supported my plan to hire 100,000 new qualified teachers to lower class size in the early grades. I thank you for that, and I ask you to make it three in a row. And to make sure all teachers know the subjects they teach, tonight I propose a new teacher quality initiative, to recruit more talented people into the classroom, reward good teachers for staying there, and give all teachers the training they need.

We know charter schools provide real public school choice. When I became President, there was just one independent public charter school in all America. Today, thanks to you, there are 1,700. I ask you now to help us meet our goal of 3,000 charter schools by next year.

We know we must connect all our classrooms to the Internet, and we're getting there. In 1994, only 3 percent of our classrooms were connected. Today, with the help of the Vice President's E-rate program, more than half of them are. And 90 percent of our schools have at least one Internet connection. But we cannot finish the job when a third of all our schools are in serious disrepair. Many of them have walls and wires so old, they're too old for the Internet. So tonight, I propose to help 5,000 schools a year make immediate and urgent repairs and, again, to help build or modernize 6,000 more, to get

students out of trailers and into high-tech classrooms.

I ask all of you to help me double our bipartisan GEAR UP program, which provides mentors for disadvantaged young people. If we double it, we can provide mentors for 1.4 million of them. Let's also offer these kids from disadvantaged backgrounds the same chance to take the same college test-prep courses wealthier students use to boost their test scores.

To make the American dream achievable for all, we must make college affordable for all. For 7 years, on a bipartisan basis, we have taken action toward that goal: larger Pell grants, more affordable student loans, education IRA's, and our HOPE scholarships, which have already benefited 5 million young people.

Now, 67 percent of high school graduates are going on to college. That's up 10 percent since 1993. Yet millions of families still strain to pay college tuition. They need help. So I propose a landmark $30-billion college opportunity tax cut, a middle class tax deduction for up to $10,000 in college tuition costs. The previous actions of this Congress have already made 2 years of college affordable for all. It's time make 4 years of college affordable for all. If we take all these steps, we'll move a long way toward making sure every child starts school ready to learn and graduates ready to succeed.

We also need a 21st century revolution to reward work and strengthen families by giving every parent the tools to succeed at work and at the most important work of all, raising children. That means making sure every family has health care and the support to care for aging parents, the tools to bring their children up right, and that no child grows up in poverty.

From my first days as President, we've worked to give families better access to better health care. In 1997, we passed the Children's Health Insurance Program—CHIP—so that workers who don't have coverage through their employers at least can get it for their children. So far, we've enrolled 2 million children; we're well on our way to our goal of 5 million.

But there are still more than 40 million of our fellow Americans without health insurance, more than there were in 1993. Tonight I propose that we follow Vice President Gore's suggestion to make low income parents eligible for the insurance that covers their children. Together with our children's initiative—think of this—together with our children's initiative, this action would enable us to cover nearly a quarter of all the uninsured people in America.

Again, I want to ask you to let people between the ages of 55 and 65, the fastest growing group of uninsured, buy into Medicare. And this year I propose to give them a tax credit to make that choice an affordable one. I hope you will support that, as well.

When the baby boomers retire, Medicare will be faced with caring for twice as many of our citizens; yet, it is far from ready to do so. My generation must not ask our children's generation to shoulder our burden. We simply must act now to strengthen and modernize Medicare.

My budget includes a comprehensive plan to reform Medicare, to make it more efficient and more competitive. And it dedicates nearly $400 billion of our budget surplus to keep Medicare solvent past 2025. And at long last, it also provides funds to give every senior a voluntary choice of affordable coverage for prescription drugs.

Lifesaving drugs are an indispensable part of modern medicine. No one creating a Medicare program today would even think of excluding coverage for prescription drugs. Yet more than three in five of our seniors now lack dependable drug coverage which can lengthen and enrich their lives. Millions of older Americans, who need prescription drugs the most, pay the highest prices for them. In good conscience, we cannot let another year pass without extending to all our seniors this lifeline of affordable prescription drugs.

Record numbers of Americans are providing for aging or ailing loved ones at home. It's a loving but a difficult and often very expensive choice. Last year I proposed a $1,000 tax credit for long-term care. Frankly, it wasn't enough. This year let's triple it to $3,000. But this year, let's pass it.

We also have to make needed investments to expand access to mental health care. I want to take a moment to thank the person

who led our first White House Conference on Mental Health last year and who for 7 years has led all our efforts to break down the barriers to decent treatment of people with mental illness. Thank you, Tipper Gore.

Taken together, these proposals would mark the largest investment in health care in the 35 years since Medicare was created—the largest investment in 35 years. That would be a big step toward assuring quality health care for all Americans, young and old. And I ask you to embrace them and pass them.

We must also make investments that reward work and support families. Nothing does that better than the earned-income tax credit, the EITC. The "E" in the EITC is about earning, working, taking responsibility, and being rewarded for it. In my very first address to you, I asked Congress to greatly expand this credit, and you did. As a result, in 1998 alone, the EITC helped more than 4.3 million Americans work their way out of poverty toward the middle class. That's double the number in 1993.

Tonight I propose another major expansion of the EITC: to reduce the marriage penalty, to make sure it rewards marriage as it rewards work, and also to expand the tax credit for families that have more than two children. It punishes people with more than two children today. Our proposal would allow families with three or more children to get up to $1,100 more in tax relief. These are working families; their children should not be in poverty.

We also can't reward work and family unless men and women get equal pay for equal work. Today the female unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in 46 years. Yet, women still only earn about 75 cents for every dollar men earn. We must do better, by providing the resources to enforce present equal pay laws, training more women for high-paying, high-tech jobs, and passing the "Paycheck Fairness Act."

Many working parents spend up to a quarter—a quarter—of their income on child care. Last year, we helped parents provide child care for about 2 million children. My child care initiative, before you now, along with funds already secured in welfare reform, would make child care better, safer, and more affordable for another 400,000 children. I ask you to pass that. They need it out there.

For hard-pressed middle income families, we should also expand the child care tax credit. And I believe strongly we should take the next big step and make that tax credit refundable for low income families. For people making under $30,000 a year, that could mean up to $2,400 for child care costs. You know, we all say we're pro-work and pro-family. Passing this proposal would prove it.

Ten of millions of Americans live from paycheck to paycheck. As hard as they work, they still don't have the opportunity to save. Too few can make use of IRA's and 401k plans. We should do more to help all working families save and accumulate wealth. That's the idea behind the Individual Development Accounts, the IDA's. I ask you to take that idea to a new level, with new retirement savings accounts that enable every low- and moderate-income family in America to save for retirement, a first home, a medical emergency, or a college education. I propose to match their contributions, however small, dollar for dollar, every year they save. And I propose to give a major new tax credit to any small business that will provide a meaningful pension to its workers. Those people ought to have retirement as well as the rest of us.

Nearly one in three American children grows up without a father. These children are 5 times more likely to live in poverty than children with both parents at home. Clearly, demanding and supporting responsible fatherhood is critical to lifting all our children out of poverty. We've doubled child support collections since 1992. And I'm proposing to you tough new measures to hold still more fathers responsible.

But we should recognize that a lot of fathers want to do right by their children but need help to do it. Carlos Rosas of St. Paul, Minnesota, wanted to do right by his son, and he got the help to do it. Now he's got a good job, and he supports his little boy. My budget will help 40,000 more fathers make the same choices Carlos Rosas did. I thank him for being here tonight. Stand up, Carlos. [*Applause*] Thank you.

If there is any single issue on which we should be able to reach across party lines, it is in our common commitment to reward work and strengthen families. Just remember what we did last year. We came together to help people with disabilities keep their health insurance when they go to work. And I thank you for that. Thanks to overwhelming bipartisan support from this Congress, we have improved foster care. We've helped those young people who leave it when they turn 18, and we have dramatically increased the number of foster care children going into adoptive homes. I thank all of you for all of that.

Of course, I am forever grateful to the person who has led our efforts from the beginning and who's worked so tirelessly for children and families for 30 years now, my wife, Hillary, and I thank her.

If we take the steps just discussed, we can go a long, long way toward empowering parents to succeed at home and at work and ensuring that no child is raised in poverty. We can make these vital investments in health care, education, support for working families, and still offer tax cuts to help pay for college, for retirement, to care for aging parents, to reduce the marriage penalty. We can do these things without forsaking the path of fiscal discipline that got us to this point here tonight.

Indeed, we must make these investments and these tax cuts in the context of a balanced budget that strengthens and extends the life of Social Security and Medicare and pays down the national debt.

Crime in America has dropped for the past 7 years—that's the longest decline on record—thanks to a national consensus we helped to forge on community police, sensible gun safety laws, and effective prevention. But nobody, nobody here, nobody in America believes we're safe enough. So again, I ask you to set a higher goal. Let's make this country the safest big country in the world.

Last fall, Congress supported my plan to hire, in addition to the 100,000 community police we've already funded, 50,000 more, concentrated in high-crime neighborhoods. I ask your continued support for that.

Soon after the Columbine tragedy, Congress considered commonsense gun legislation, to require Brady background checks at the gun shows, child safety locks for new handguns, and a ban on the importation of large-capacity ammunition clips. With courage and a tie-breaking vote by the Vice President—[*laughter*]—the Senate faced down the gun lobby, stood up for the American people, and passed this legislation. But the House failed to follow suit.

Now, we have all seen what happens when guns fall into the wrong hands. Daniel Mauser was only 15 years old when he was gunned down at Columbine. He was an amazing kid, a straight-A student, a good skier. Like all parents who lose their children, his father, Tom, has borne unimaginable grief. Somehow he has found the strength to honor his son by transforming his grief into action. Earlier this month, he took a leave of absence from his job to fight for tougher gun safety laws. I pray that his courage and wisdom will at long last move this Congress to make commonsense gun legislation the very next order of business. Tom Mauser, stand up. We thank you for being here tonight. Tom. Thank you, Tom.

We must strengthen our gun laws and enforce those already on the books better. Federal gun crime prosecutions are up 16 percent since I took office. But we must do more. I propose to hire more Federal and local gun prosecutors and more ATF agents to crack down on illegal gun traffickers and bad-apple dealers. And we must give them the enforcement tools that they need, tools to trace every gun and every bullet used in every gun crime in the United States. I ask you to help us do that.

Every State in this country already requires hunters and automobile drivers to have a license. I think they ought to do the same thing for handgun purchases. Now specifically, I propose a plan to ensure that all new handgun buyers must first have a photo license from their State showing they passed the Brady background check and a gun safety course, before they get the gun. I hope you'll help me pass that in this Congress.

Listen to this—listen to this. The accidental gun rate—the accidental gun death rate of children under 15 in the United States

is 9 times higher than in the other 25 industrialized countries combined. Now, technologies now exist that could lead to guns that can only be fired by the adults who own them. I ask Congress to fund research into smart gun technology to save these children's lives. I ask responsible leaders in the gun industry to work with us on smart guns and other steps to keep guns out of the wrong hands to keep our children safe.

You know, every parent I know worries about the impact of violence in the media on their children. I want to begin by thanking the entertainment industry for accepting my challenge to put voluntary ratings on TV programs and video and Internet games. But frankly, the ratings are too numerous, diverse, and confusing to be really useful to parents. So tonight, I ask the industry to accept the First Lady's challenge to develop a single voluntary rating system for all children's entertainment that is easier for parents to understand and enforce. The steps I outline will take us well on our way to making America the safest big country in the world.

Now, to keep our historic economic expansion going, the subject of a lot of discussion in this community and others, I believe we need a 21st century revolution to open new markets, start new businesses, hire new workers right here in America, in our inner cities, poor rural areas, and Native American reservations.

Our Nation's prosperity hasn't yet reached these places. Over the last 6 months, I've traveled to a lot of them, joined by many of you and many far-sighted business people, to shine a spotlight on the enormous potential in communities from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta, from Watts to the Pine Ridge reservation. Everywhere I go, I meet talented people eager for opportunity and able to work. Tonight I ask you, let's put them to work. For business, it's the smart thing to do. For America, it's the right thing to do. And let me ask you something: If we don't do this now, when in the wide world will we ever get around to it?

So I ask Congress to give businesses the same incentives to invest in America's new markets they now have to invest in markets overseas. Tonight I propose a large new markets tax credit and other incentives to spur $22 billion in private-sector capital to create new businesses and new investments in our inner cities and rural areas. Because empowerment zones have been creating these opportunities for 5 years now, I also ask you to increase incentives to invest in them and to create more of them.

And let me say to all of you again what I have tried to say at every turn: This is not a Democratic or a Republican issue. Giving people a chance to live their dreams is an American issue.

Mr. Speaker, it was a powerful moment last November when you joined Reverend Jesse Jackson and me in your home State of Illinois and committed to working toward our common goal by combining the best ideas from both sides of the aisle. I want to thank you again and to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with you. This is a worthy joint endeavor. Thank you.

I also ask you to make special efforts to address the areas of our Nation with the highest rates of poverty, our Native American reservations and the Mississippi Delta. My budget includes a $110 million initiative to promote economic development in the Delta and a billion dollars to increase economic opportunity, health care, education, and law enforcement for our Native American communities. We should begin this new century by honoring our historic responsibility to empower the first Americans. And I want to thank tonight the leaders and the members from both parties who've expressed to me an interest in working with us on these efforts. They are profoundly important.

There's another part of our American community in trouble tonight, our family farmers. When I signed the farm bill in 1996, I said there was great danger it would work well in good times but not in bad. Well, droughts, floods, and historically low prices have made these times very bad for the farmers. We must work together to strengthen the farm safety net, invest in land conservation, and create some new markets for them by expanding our programs for bio-based fuels and products. Please, they need help. Let's do it together.

Opportunity for all requires something else today, having access to a computer and

knowing how to use it. That means we must close the digital divide between those who've got the tools and those who don't. Connecting classrooms and libraries to the Internet is crucial, but it's just a start. My budget ensures that all new teachers are trained to teach 21st century skills, and it creates technology centers in 1,000 communities to serve adults. This spring, I'll invite high-tech leaders to join me on another new markets tour, to close the digital divide and open opportunity for our people. I want to thank the high-tech companies that already are doing so much in this area. I hope the new tax incentives I have proposed will get all the rest of them to join us. This is a national crusade. We have got to do this and do it quickly.

Now, again I say to you, these are steps, but step by step, we can go a long way toward our goal of bringing opportunity to every community.

To realize the full possibilities of this economy, we must reach beyond our own borders, to shape the revolution that is tearing down barriers and building new networks among nations and individuals and economies and cultures: globalization. It's the central reality of our time.

Of course, change this profound is both liberating and threatening to people. But there's no turning back. And our open, creative society stands to benefit more than any other if we understand and act on the realities of interdependence. We have to be at the center of every vital global network, as a good neighbor and a good partner. We have to recognize that we cannot build our future without helping others to build theirs.

The first thing we have got to do is to forge a new consensus on trade. Now, those of us who believe passionately in the power of open trade, we have to ensure that it lifts both our living standards and our values, never tolerating abusive child labor or a race to the bottom in the environment and worker protection. But others must recognize that open markets and rule-based trade are the best engines we know of for raising living standards, reducing global poverty and environmental destruction, and assuring the free flow of ideas.

I believe, as strongly tonight as I did the first day I got here, the only direction forward for America on trade—the only direction for America on trade is to keep going forward. I ask you to help me forge that consensus. We have to make developing economies our partners in prosperity. That's why I would like to ask you again to finalize our groundbreaking African and Caribbean Basin trade initiatives.

But globalization is about more than economics. Our purpose must be to bring together the world around freedom and democracy and peace and to oppose those who would tear it apart. Here are the fundamental challenges I believe America must meet to shape the 21st century world.

First, we must continue to encourage our former adversaries, Russia and China, to emerge as stable, prosperous, democratic nations. Both are being held back today from reaching their full potential: Russia by the legacy of communism, an economy in turmoil, a cruel and self-defeating war in Chechnya; China by the illusion that it can buy stability at the expense of freedom.

But think how much has changed in the past decade: 5,000 former Soviet nuclear weapons taken out of commission; Russian soldiers actually serving with ours in the Balkans; Russian people electing their leaders for the first time in a thousand years; and in China, an economy more open to the world than ever before.

Of course, no one, not a single person in this Chamber tonight can know for sure what direction these great nations will take. But we do know for sure that we can choose what we do. And we should do everything in our power to increase the chance that they will choose wisely, to be constructive members of our global community.

That's why we should support those Russians who are struggling for a democratic, prosperous future; continue to reduce both our nuclear arsenals; and help Russia to safeguard weapons and materials that remain.

And that's why I believe Congress should support the agreement we negotiated to bring China into the WTO, by passing permanent normal trade relations with China as soon as possible this year.

I think you ought to do it for two reasons: First of all, our markets are already open to

China; this agreement will open China's markets to us; and second, it will plainly advance the cause of peace in Asia and promote the cause of change in China. No, we don't know where it's going. All we can do is decide what we're going to do. But when all is said and done, we need to know we did everything we possibly could to maximize the chance that China will choose the right future.

A second challenge we've got is to protect our own security from conflicts that pose the risk of wider war and threaten our common humanity. We can't prevent every conflict or stop every outrage. But where our interests are at stake and we can make a difference, we should be, and we must be, peacemakers.

We should be proud of our role in bringing the Middle East closer to a lasting peace, building peace in Northern Ireland, working for peace in East Timor and Africa, promoting reconciliation between Greece and Turkey and in Cyprus, working to defuse these crises between India and Pakistan, in defending human rights and religious freedom. And we should be proud of the men and women of our Armed Forces and those of our allies who stopped the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, enabling a million people to return to their homes.

When Slobodan Milosevic unleashed his terror on Kosovo, Captain John Cherrey was one of the brave airmen who turned the tide. And when another American plane was shot down over Serbia, he flew into the teeth of enemy air defenses to bring his fellow pilot home. Thanks to our Armed Forces' skill and bravery, we prevailed in Kosovo without losing a single American in combat. I want to introduce Captain Cherrey to you. We honor Captain Cherrey, and we promise you, Captain, we'll finish the job you began. Stand up so we can see you.

A third challenge we have is to keep this inexorable march of technology from giving terrorists and potentially hostile nations the means to undermine our defenses. Keep in mind, the same technological advances that have shrunk cell phones to fit in the palms of our hands can also make weapons of terror easier to conceal and easier to use.

We must meet this threat by making effective agreements to restrain nuclear and missile programs in North Korea, curbing the flow of lethal technology to Iran, preventing Iraq from threatening its neighbors, increasing our preparedness against chemical and biological attack, protecting our vital computer systems from hackers and criminals, and developing a system to defend against new missile threats, while working to preserve our ABM missile treaty with Russia. We must do all these things.

I predict to you, when most of us are long gone but some time in the next 10 to 20 years, the major security threat this country will face will come from the enemies of the nation state: the narcotraffickers and the terrorists and the organized criminals, who will be organized together, working together, with increasing access to ever-more sophisticated chemical and biological weapons. And I want to thank the Pentagon and others for doing what they're doing right now to try to help protect us and plan for that, so that our defenses will be strong. I ask for your support to ensure they can succeed.

I also want to ask you for a constructive bipartisan dialog this year to work to build a consensus which I hope will eventually lead to the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

I hope we can also have a constructive effort to meet the challenge that is presented to our planet by the huge gulf between rich and poor. We cannot accept a world in which part of humanity lives on the cutting edge of a new economy and the rest live on the bare edge of survival. I think we have to do our part to change that with expanded trade, expanded aid, and the expansion of freedom.

This is interesting: From Nigeria to Indonesia, more people got the right to choose their leaders in 1999 than in 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell. We've got to stand by these democracies, including, and especially tonight, Colombia, which is fighting narcotraffickers, for its own people's lives and our children's lives. I have proposed a strong 2-year package to help Colombia win this fight. I want to thank the leaders in both parties in both Houses for listening to me and the President of Colombia about it. We have got to pass this. I want to ask your help. A lot is riding on it. And it's so important for the long-term stability of our country and for what happens in Latin America.

I also want you to know I'm going to send you new legislation to go after what these drug barons value the most, their money. And I hope you'll pass that as well.

In a world where over a billion people live on less than a dollar a day, we also have got to do our part in the global endeavor to reduce the debts of the poorest countries, so they can invest in education, health care, and economic growth. That's what the Pope and other religious leaders have urged us to do. And last year, Congress made a downpayment on America's share. I ask you to continue that. I thank you for what you did and ask you to stay the course.

I also want to say that America must help more nations to break the bonds of disease. Last year in Africa, 10 times as many people died from AIDS as were killed in wars—10 times. The budget I give you invests $150 million more in the fight against this and other infectious killers. And today I propose a tax credit to speed the development of vaccines for diseases like malaria, TB, and AIDS. I ask the private sector and our partners around the world to join us in embracing this cause. We can save millions of lives together, and we ought to do it.

I also want to mention our final challenge, which, as always, is the most important. I ask you to pass a national security budget that keeps our military the best trained and best equipped in the world, with heightened readiness and 21st century weapons, which raises salaries for our service men and women, which protects our veterans, which fully funds the diplomacy that keeps our soldiers out of war, which makes good on our commitment to our U.N. dues and arrears. I ask you to pass this budget.

I also want to say something, if I might, very personal tonight. The American people watching us at home, with the help of all the commentators, can tell, from who stands and who sits and who claps and who doesn't, that there's still modest differences of opinion in this room. [*Laughter*] But I want to thank you for something, every one of you. I want to thank you for the extraordinary support you have given, Republicans and Democrats alike, to our men and women in uniform. I thank you for that.

I also want to thank, especially, two people. First, I want to thank our Secretary of Defense, Bill Cohen, for symbolizing our bipartisan commitment to national security. Thank you, sir. Even more, I want to thank his wife, Janet, who, more than any other American citizen, has tirelessly traveled this world to show the support we all feel for our troops. Thank you, Janet Cohen. I appreciate that. Thank you.

These are the challenges we have to meet so that we can lead the world toward peace and freedom in an era of globalization.

I want to tell you that I am very grateful for many things as President. But one of the things I'm grateful for is the opportunity that the Vice President and I have had to finally put to rest the bogus idea that you cannot grow the economy and protect the environment at the same time.

As our economy has grown, we've rid more than 500 neighborhoods of toxic waste, ensured cleaner air and water for millions of people. In the past 3 months alone, we've helped preserve 40 million acres of roadless lands in the national forests, created three new national monuments.

But as our communities grow, our commitment to conservation must continue to grow. Tonight I propose creating a permanent conservation fund, to restore wildlife, protect coastlines, save natural treasures, from the California redwoods to the Florida Everglades.

This lands legacy endowment would represent by far the most enduring investment in land preservation ever proposed in this House. I hope we can get together with all the people with different ideas and do this. This is a gift we should give to our children and our grandchildren for all time, across party lines. We can make an agreement to do this.

Last year the Vice President launched a new effort to make communities more liberal—livable—[*laughter*]—liberal, I know. [*Laughter*] Wait a minute, I've got a punchline now. That's this year's agenda; last year was livable, right? [*Laughter*] That's what Senator Lott is going to say in the commentary afterwards—[*laughter*]—to make our communities more livable. This is big business. This is a big issue. What does that

mean? You ask anybody that lives in an unlivable community, and they'll tell you. They want their kids to grow up next to parks, not parking lots; the parents don't have to spend all their time stalled in traffic when they could be home with their children.

Tonight I ask you to support new funding for the following things, to make American communities for liberal—livable. [*Laughter*] I've done pretty well with this speech, but I can't say that.

One, I want you to help us to do three things. We need more funding for advanced transit systems. We need more funding for saving open spaces in places of heavy development. And we need more funding—this ought to have bipartisan appeal—we need more funding for helping major cities around the Great Lakes protect their waterways and enhance their quality of life. We need these things, and I want you to help us.

The greatest environmental challenge of the new century is global warming. The scientists tell us the 1990's were the hottest decade of the entire millennium. If we fail to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, deadly heat waves and droughts will become more frequent, coastal areas will flood, and economies will be disrupted. That is going to happen, unless we act.

Many people in the United States, some people in this Chamber, and lots of folks around the world still believe you cannot cut greenhouse gas emissions without slowing economic growth. In the industrial age, that may well have been true. But in this digital economy, it is not true anymore. New technologies make it possible to cut harmful emissions and provide even more growth.

For example, just last week, automakers unveiled cars that get 70 to 80 miles a gallon, the fruits of a unique research partnership between Government and industry. And before you know it, efficient production of biofuels will give us the equivalent of hundreds of miles from a gallon of gasoline.

To speed innovation in these kind of technologies, I think we should give a major tax incentive to business for the production of clean energy and to families for buying energy-saving homes and appliances and the next generation of super efficient cars when they hit the showroom floor. I also ask the auto industry to use the available technologies to make all new cars more fuel-efficient right away.

And I ask this Congress to do something else. Please help us make more of our clean energy technology available to the developing world. That will create cleaner growth abroad and a lot more new jobs here in the United States of America.

In the new century, innovations in science and technology will be key not only to the health of the environment but to miraculous improvements in the quality of our lives and advances in the economy. Later this year, researchers will complete the first draft of the entire human genome, the very blueprint of life. It is important for all our fellow Americans to recognize that Federal tax dollars have funded much of this research and that this and other wise investments in science are leading to a revolution in our ability to detect, treat, and prevent disease.

For example, researchers have identified genes that cause Parkinson's, diabetes, and certain kinds of cancer; they are designing precision therapies that will block the harmful effect of these genes for good. Researchers already are using this new technique to target and destroy cells that cause breast cancer. Soon, we may be able to use it to prevent the onset of Alzheimer's. Scientists are also working on an artificial retina to help many blind people to see and—listen to this—microchips that would actually directly stimulate damaged spinal cords in a way that could allow people now paralyzed to stand up and walk.

These kinds of innovations are also propelling our remarkable prosperity. Information technology only includes 8 percent of our employment, but now it counts for a third of our economic growth along with jobs that pay, by the way, about 80 percent above the private sector average. Again, we ought to keep in mind, Government-funded research brought supercomputers, the Internet, and communications satellites into being. Soon researchers will bring us devices that can translate foreign languages as fast as you can talk, materials 10 times stronger than steel at a fraction of the weight, and—this is unbelievable to me—molecular computers the

size of a teardrop with the power of today's fastest supercomputers.

To accelerate the march of discovery across all these disciplines in science and technology, I ask you to support my recommendation of an unprecedented $3 billion in the 21st century research fund, the largest increase in civilian research in a generation. We owe it to our future.

Now, these new breakthroughs have to be used in ways that reflect our values. First and foremost, we have to safeguard our citizens' privacy. Last year we proposed to protect every citizen's medical record. This year we will finalize those rules. We've also taken the first steps to protect the privacy of bank and credit card records and other financial statements. Soon I will send legislation to you to finish that job. We must also act to prevent any genetic discrimination whatever by employers or insurers. I hope you will support that.

These steps will allow us to lead toward the far frontiers of science and technology. They will enhance our health, the environment, the economy in ways we can't even imagine today. But we all know that at a time when science, technology, and the forces of globalization are bringing so many changes into all our lives, it's more important than ever that we strengthen the bonds that root us in our local communities and in our national community.

No tie binds different people together like citizen service. There's a new spirit of service in America, a movement we've tried to support with AmeriCorps, expanded Peace Corps, unprecedented new partnerships with businesses, foundations, community groups; partnerships, for example, like the one that enlisted 12,000 companies which have now moved 650,000 of our fellow citizens from welfare to work; partnerships to battle drug abuse, AIDS, teach young people to read, save America's treasures, strengthen the arts, fight teen pregnancy, prevent violence among young people, promote racial healing. The American people are working together.

But we should do more to help Americans help each other. First, we should help faith-based organizations to do more to fight poverty and drug abuse and help people get back on the right track, with initiatives like Second Chance Homes that do so much to help unwed teen mothers. Second, we should support Americans who tithe and contribute to charities but don't earn enough to claim a tax deduction for it. Tonight I propose new tax incentives that would allow low and middle income citizens who don't itemize to get that deduction. It's nothing but fair, and it will get more people to give.

We should do more to help new immigrants to fully participate in our community. That's why I recommend spending more to teach them civics and English. And since everybody in our community counts, we've got to make sure everyone is counted in this year's census.

Within 10 years—just 10 years—there will be no majority race in our largest State of California. In a little more than 50 years, there will be no majority race in America. In a more interconnected world, this diversity can be our greatest strength. Just look around this Chamber. Look around. We have Members in this Congress from virtually every racial, ethnic, and religious background. And I think you would agree that America is stronger because of it. [*Applause*]

You also have to agree that all those differences you just clapped for all too often spark hatred and division even here at home. Just in the last couple of years, we've seen a man dragged to death in Texas just because he was black. We saw a young man murdered in Wyoming just because he was gay. Last year we saw the shootings of African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Jewish children just because of who they were. This is not the American way, and we must draw the line.

I ask you to draw that line by passing without delay the "Hate Crimes Prevention Act" and the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act." And I ask you to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

Finally tonight, I propose the largest ever investment in our civil rights laws for enforcement, because no American should be subjected to discrimination in finding a home, getting a job, going to school, or securing a loan. Protections in law should be protections in fact.

Last February, because I thought this was so important, I created the White House Office of One America to promote racial reconciliation. That's what one of my personal heroes, Hank Aaron, has done all his life. From his days as our all-time home run king to his recent acts of healing, he has always brought people together. We should follow his example, and we're honored to have him with us tonight. Stand up, Hank Aaron.

I just want to say one more thing about this, and I want every one of you to think about this the next time you get mad at one of your colleagues on the other side of the aisle. This fall, at the White House, Hillary had one of her millennium dinners, and we had this very distinguished scientist there, who is an expert in this whole work in the human genome. And he said that we are all, regardless of race, genetically 99.9 percent the same.

Now, you may find that uncomfortable when you look around here. [*Laughter*] But it is worth remembering. We can laugh about this, but you think about it. Modern science has confirmed what ancient faiths have always taught: the most important fact of life is our common humanity. Therefore, we should do more than just tolerate our diversity; we should honor it and celebrate it.

My fellow Americans, every time I prepare for the State of the Union, I approach it with hope and expectation and excitement for our Nation. But tonight is very special, because we stand on the mountain top of a new millennium. Behind us we can look back and see the great expanse of American achievement, and before us we can see even greater, grander frontiers of possibility. We should, all of us, be filled with gratitude and humility for our present progress and prosperity. We should be filled with awe and joy at what lies over the horizon. And we should be filled with absolute determination to make the most of it.

You know, when the Framers finished crafting our Constitution in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin stood in Independence Hall, and he reflected on the carving of the Sun that was on the back of a chair he saw. The Sun was low on the horizon. So he said this—he said, "I've often wondered whether that Sun was rising or setting. Today," Franklin said, "I have the happiness to know it's a rising Sun." Today, because each succeeding generation of Americans has kept the fire of freedom burning brightly, lighting those frontiers of possibility, we all still bask in the glow and the warmth of Mr. Franklin's rising sun.

After 224 years, the American revolution continues. We remain a new nation. And as long as our dreams outweigh our memories, America will be forever young. That is our destiny. And this is our moment.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:18 p.m. in the House Chamber of the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson; President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); President Andres Pastrana of Colombia; Pope John Paul II; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Remarks to a United States Conference of Mayors Breakfast Reception

January 28, 2000

Thank you, and good morning, and welcome to the White House. I hope most of you are more awake than I am. [*Laughter*] But I will try—I had some remarks here that said that I wanted to amplify on my remarks last night, and I don't think that I will use that word. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank my good friend Wellington Webb—talking about getting 81 percent of the vote in Denver. You know, Denver has that sort of characteristic western independence. I always thought if anybody was in a position to get that much vote, there would be enough to say "None of the above" to keep that from happening. [*Laughter*] So it's quite a tribute to him.

Mayor Coles, Mayor Morial. I want to thank Mayor Scholz from Quincy, Illinois. He is hosting me when we leave here. And there are 20,000 people in the cold out there, so you can be sure I'll give a shorter speech today.

I want to thank the members of the administration who are here—Secretary Slater and

Secretary Cuomo, General McCaffrey, Mickey Ibarra. I want to thank Ben Johnson from our Office of One America; Lynn Cutler; and there may be many others here. But we love having the mayors here, because this is sort of a grassroots operation.

And one of the things that I really worked hard to do—one of my mayors and my neighbor and friend, Pat Hays, from North Little Rock, Arkansas, is here—you know, to be Governor of Arkansas is like being mayor of kind of a nice size city. [*Laughter*] People accept—they expect you to run the store. And when they show up, they expect you to be there. And when they call, they expect you to return the call. And if they've got a problem, they expect you to send somebody to see to it. And if you don't, pretty soon you're looking for another job. [*Laughter*]

We've really tried to create an atmosphere around here where all the people who work here, particularly people who never worked for elected officials before—the White House really wouldn't function without all these bright young people that come here and work, but many of them have not had the opportunity ever before in their lives to work for elected officials. And we try to make sure that they all remember, no matter what's going on around here, for whom we're working and what our mission is. And so when you come here and talk to us, it reminds us of that, and we're grateful.

I have so many friends in this group. I can't help mentioning one, because he was a former member of my Cabinet, Lee Brown, the mayor of Houston. I'm glad to see you, and thank you for all you did for me, and all you're doing for Houston.

I wanted to just make a couple of points briefly today. First, I wanted to mention some of the things that were mentioned in the State of the Union. Secretary Slater talked about high-speed rail, airline traffic—you know, I am committed, more than anything else, to improving commercial airline traffic this year, because in a year I'll be on it. [*Laughter*] And I want you to know I am on the job here. [*Laughter*] I probe every person who comes to see me about, was there a delay, was there a cancellation? You know, I am on this case. [*Laughter*]

I want to make in a nutshell the point I tried to make last night, when I quoted that wonderful line from President Theodore Roosevelt at the beginning of the last century, that young people with a future always take the long look ahead. We have all this good economic news. This morning we got some more good news that our economy grew at an annual rate of 5.8 percent in the last 3 months of 1999. That's the fourth year in a row we've had growth of over 4 percent, with inflation the lowest in 30 years; 7 years of consecutive double-digit business investment growth—that's the longest investment growth on record. So this unbelievable recovery marches on.

Now, for everybody in this room that's more or less my age or a little older—you know, I was talking to some of my friends last night after the speech, and I said, "Look, the reason I feel so passionately that we should, A, take the long look ahead, and really say to ourselves, 'This country's in good shape now. What do we know now, right now, are the inevitable challenges and the great opportunities facing us over the next 10, 20, 30 years, and why don't we now set the goal of meeting them, and then outline a plan to get there?'"

So I was reminding people last night. I said, "You know, when I finished high school in 1964, we had—the country had been through President Kennedy's death, and it was very traumatic. But we still had very low unemployment. We had very good growth. We had almost no inflation. We still thought we could deal with the civil rights needs and demands and imperatives of our country in an orderly and legal way, and the country wouldn't come apart. And you know, we had this sense that we could get there."

And within 2 or 3 years, the country was coming apart at the seams. A President, Lyndon Johnson, who passionately believed in civil rights, found his ability to make advances crippled by the controversies he faced over the war in Vietnam abroad and the civil rights crisis at home. And our country then went from turmoil to turmoil to turmoil. And it's taken us 35 years to get an economy that is, frankly, even better than it was then, to have the advances we have in building our one America, and to be in this position again.

Now, anybody that's ever lived long enough knows two things: Number one, no condition, good or bad in life, lasts forever; that makes life interesting and challenging. The principle of surprise is always there. And when you pass an opportunity, you don't know how long you're going to have to wait for it to come around again. And the second thing that anybody that's over 30 years old has learned, one way or another, is that sometimes you make the worst mistakes in life when you think things are going along so well you don't have to worry about what you're doing, where you're going, whether to plan, and whether to make hard decisions. Nobody who's lived any length of years who can't remember a time in personal, family, business, or public life, when mistakes were made and opportunities were missed because things were going well.

And that's why I tried to speak to the American people with such passion last night. We have waited a long time for our country to be in a position, because of our prosperity, to reach across party lines and regional and racial and all the other lines that divide us, to try to say, "Okay, here we go. We're starting a new century. Now, it doesn't matter whether you're a Republican or a Democrat. We are going to double the number of people over 65 in the next 30 years, and a lot of us hope to be among them. You can't avoid that. It doesn't matter what your politics are. We've got the largest group of kids we ever had; they're from the most diverse backgrounds they've ever been. It's a meal ticket to the future if they all get an education, and if we can get rid of poverty among our kids." And I could go on and on.

That's what I was trying to say last night. That is what you live every day. You get hired to show up and do something. But the further away you move from the grassroots, the more likely politics is to shift from deeds to words, partly because we're such a long way away from people we're trying to support and to empower. So you mayors, you can make a difference here. We don't want to miss this moment.

And as I said last night, something else that you all know: No great goal is reached in a single step, but if you take steps toward that goal, you make a lot of progress.

You all remember the story of the guy that had a mild heart attack, and it made him kind of goofy. And he went to the doctor, and the doctor said, "You think you could walk 3 miles a day and get well? You know, you could really help yourself a lot." And he said, "Well, I'll sure try." So he called him in a week, and he said, "Well, Doc, I made it for a whole week. I walked 3 miles every day." And he said, "But, honestly, I don't know what to do." And he said, "Why?" And he said, "Well, I'm 21 miles from home, and I don't know anybody here." [*Laughter*] You get a long way going step by step.

So I want you to think about that today. And very briefly, let me ask your help on one or two things. I know that you saw the President of Colombia, who used to be one of your colleagues, and I'm sure General McCaffrey has talked to you about that, so I won't deal with that. But let me just mention one or two things. We've got to take this school construction issue seriously.

Now, there is some—to be fair, there's more than politics here. Some Members of the Congress are genuinely reluctant to see the United States Government get involved in this issue because it has always been a State and local issue, and for some of our States, including mine when I was Governor, an entirely local issue. And we were—I think we had the third highest percentage of our school budget funded at the State—of any State in the country when I was Governor. But the problem is you've got these kids that are just pouring out of a lot of these schools.

I've been to schools with a dozen trailers—a dozen—outside. You've got all these other schools, literally—I've been to schools that were too decrepit to wire for the Internet. And what I would like to do is to really see us jump-start this effort. And I know—you know what always happens. If we put some money in, then others are encouraged, and more people do it, and you get this thing going. And basically, to be able to do these kind of more urgent repairs on 5,000 schools a year, and then actually build or dramatically modernize 6,000 others, it would spark a whole wave of this across the country.

There's lots of evidence that young children, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, get a very bad signal if they show

up at a school where the windows are broken, or they have to be boarded over, and it's dark and the paint is always peeling, and they can't get what other kids can do. I think this is a big deal, and I'd like to ask you to help us on that. I also hope—[*applause*]—thank you.

I feel very strongly that it's—we're going to keep wiring these classrooms, and a lot of you have benefited from the E-rate program. But we've got to do more to train the teachers, because we've got to make sure we can make the most of it. That's very important. I hope you'll help me. I know this is quite popular in most of your communities—once again, double the after-school and the summer school programs. It makes a big difference.

And if you have one of these GEAR UP programs in your community, you know that it's working quite well. We send college students in to mentor middle school kids who are disadvantaged, at risk, and we not only mentor them, we begin to tell them when they're 12, 13, 14 years old, what the present package of student aid is so they all know. A lot of these kids have no other earthly idea all the things that have been done in the last 5 years to increase scholarships and loans and work-study programs, and all this. If we can actually convince them that the money will be there for them to go, that's a powerful incentive for them to learn more and to stay in school and begin to aspire, to take their own long look ahead. So I want to ask you to help us on that.

Secondly, I ask you to help us pass this new markets legislation and to increase the number of empowerment zones and to increase the EITC. One of the things that I didn't mention last night—I think that Secretary Cuomo has pioneered so many good things, but one thing I want to mention in particular are these housing vouchers that we use to help low income people move closer to their place of work. We've now done 110,000 of them; in this budget we can more than double that. And I'd like to ask your help on that.

Now, there are a lot of other things, and I'm sure Andrew went over the things in the HUD initiative, but there are a lot of great things that we can do to be better partners with you. But there are some things you can also do to be good partners with us; I'll just mention two. Because, again, we have a chance to dramatically cut poverty in America among our children. Child poverty is at a 21-year low; we can get it much, much lower. It's still unconscionably high in America.

And I'd just like to mention two things if I might. Number one, we have a ton of working people in America who are eligible for the earned-income tax credit who don't know it and don't claim it. Mayor Daley has launched an outreach program in Chicago because last year in Illinois he found in the State that $300 million in these credits went unclaimed to low income working people. Try it. See if you can get the data for your community, and let these working people know that they can do it.

The second thing I'd like to say is, we set up the Children's Health Insurance Program to be designed and run by the States in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act. So it took us a while to get it up and going, but last year we went from 1 to 2 million kids enrolled in a year. It took us a year and a half to get up to a million, and it was very frustrating, but now these programs are kicking in and we're up to 2 million. The money is there to insure 5 million kids.

You heard me say last night that I wanted to follow the Vice President's suggestion to let the working parents of these low income kids buy into the program. But they'll never get there if they don't have their kids enrolled in the first place, and they don't know that. So anything you can do, with all the organization and mechanisms and outreach that you have, to help us to get the enrollment in the CHIP program up, I would be profoundly grateful. It's very important. We've got to go from 2 to 5 million kids. If we go from 2 to 5 million kids, then you're looking at about 6½ million parents, we estimate, that we could enroll. And if we got that many enrolled, we'd have a quarter of all the uninsured in America would be covered by insurance. It would be a dramatic achievement.

But it is in the nature of these things that you've got to reach out and do the enrollment. And because we're a free and open

society, and a very mobile one, these things tend to be difficult.

I also hope that you can convince—we found in State after State that there are a lot of working people who somehow feel that this would signal that they were going on welfare or going back to welfare, and they don't want to do that. And we need to send the right kind of signal out here about what this is, that these things were done by their National Government because they want to work. And if they want to work, they're entitled to raise their children out of poverty and to have these basic supports.

There's also a bigger problem in enrollment in many places where people whose first language is not English. And the mayors are in a unique position to help us with that. So I would ask you to, when you go home, think about whether you can—you know, get the information from either the Federal or the State Governments on enrollment in the child health program and in the EITC, and whether there's anything you can do to alert more of your people to their eligibility and get them to claim it. I think it would be a very good thing.

Third thing I want to say—I've got to do this, because I blew it twice last night—we are going to build more livable communities. [*Laughter*] That was weird. In my whole life, I've never mispronounced that word before last night. [*Laughter*] See what I'm saying? The element of surprise is always there. [*Laughter*]

Denver's done a lot of work on the livable community issue with regard to brownfields, cleaning up around Stapleton Airport. And this is an issue, in different ways, for most of you. So again, I ask you to help us pass this. This is the sort of thing that really ought to be not a partisan issue either. So many communities are worried about preserving some sense of balance and harmony in transportation and saving some green spaces, development proceeds apace, or overcoming some environmental eyesore. And so I would like to ask you to help. I think it's very important.

Last night I also proposed to create a permanent endowment to protect lands across the country as part of our lands legacy initiative. Half the fund would be dedicated to State and local conservation efforts, and we would have a—listen to this—a tenfold increase in the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery program and a significant increase for our Urban and Community Forestry program. This is very important to me.

When Rodney and I were back home in Arkansas and we had terrible economic problems in the Mississippi Delta, we picked the 11 hardest hit counties, and we spent endless hours out there doing grassroots meetings. It was astonishing the number of little towns that said to us, "Yes, we're having trouble economically, but we're most worried about our kids. Can't you give us some help with recreation?"

And we developed this sort of basic blueprint plan for little city parks, that even very, very small towns could build. And we set up this—what would today look like a tiny grant program. And we were flooded with all these—I mean little towns, 200 people, 300 people, 500 people, you know—asking for this money, because they had nothing to do for their children. So this urban initiative is a very important part of this lands legacy matter to me, because in the biggest urban neighborhoods, you still have the same issue. And parents want their children to have something positive to do, even before they want another job in the neighborhood. So I hope you'll help me pass this.

And again, this is something that I hope will be way beyond partisanship this year. It's a small part of the budget, with a big benefit for your folks back home.

Wellington mentioned the crime initiative. We know the Brady bill works. We know it does. The gun death rate is at a 30-year low, criminal gun death rate—30-year low. And we need to extend it to check at the gun shows, which occur mostly in rural areas and the urban flea markets, where people who couldn't get a gun at a registered store can get it. We do need to strengthen enforcement, because about one percent of our gun dealers do most of the damage to the law, insofar as gun dealers are doing it.

And we need to add the 50,000 more police. You know, you all have done a wonderful job with this community policing program, and I thank you for it. We're coming back with another 50,000, and we're going to try

to get the second round of appropriations for it this year. And we're trying to concentrate these forces in the areas of highest crime.

But I will say again, you know, when I got here—and this is not me; this is all of you who did this, all we tried to do was give you the tools to do it, but—if I had come here 7 years ago and given a speech to you and said, "Look, here's what my goal is: we're going to make America the safest big country in the world," you would have said, "That poor deluded guy. We're in for a long ride"—[*laughter*]—because people weren't even sure we could make the crime go down, much less stay down. But we've had 7 years in a row, now, and it keeps going down, because you know what to do. Your police departments know what to do. You know what to do.

And if you know what to do and if we've proved we can get crime down, then we don't have any excuse to stop until this country's the safest big country in the world. So I ask you to help us with that.

And finally I want to make a serious remark, although I was more serious than you know about the airline remark I made earlier. [*Laughter*] I want you to help us get these investments in advanced transportation technology. What I said last night was true—a lot of you probably read about the cars at the Detroit auto show that are getting 70 and 80 miles a gallon, dual/fuel cars, direct fuel-injection engines. They're using more and more composite materials to design cars now that are 500 to 1,000 pounds lighter but do the same on damage tests as steel cars. It's a remarkable thing.

And it is true—I wanted to explain what I said last night—this biofuel issue, not just ethanol made from corn, but you'll soon see fuels can be made from rice hulls and other agricultural byproducts or even grass fields. And essentially, what these scientists—the problem now is that the conversion ratio is not great: It takes 7 gallons of gasoline to make 8 gallons of ethanol. I mean, you're ahead but not much.

And they're working on breaking the chemical barriers to efficient conversion, which was how we got gasoline from crude oil. It's the same sort of thing. The scientists that are working on this estimate that pretty soon they'll have a breakthrough that will allow them to make 8 gallons of ethanol or other biofuel with 1 gallon of gasoline. Now, if you've got a car getting 70 miles a gallon, that means you're getting 560 miles a gallon, if it can run on ethanol.

So we have a chance to completely rewrite the transportation future of America, to dramatically reduce the one-third of our greenhouse gases that come out of transportation and do it without some crippling regulation or some astronomical tax. But we've got to have the money to do this research.

We built a—well, we worked with the Home Builders, Andrew and with the Energy Department and others, to build a housing development, the Inland Empire in San Bernardino, right on the rail line coming out of L.A. And we told—for very low income working people, we said, "If you buy a house here, we will guarantee you that your average power bills will be 40 percent lower than they would in a house of the same size anywhere else." And after 2 years, the average power bills are down 65 percent, because of the new lighting, because of the new windows, because of the new insulation. I mean, this thing is going—but we've got to have the money to do the research.

So that's a long way from being mayor, funding somebody's research, but it will change your lives and your ability to do your job if you'll help us. And it's especially important in high-speed rail.

I do think, for reasons I don't entirely understand—maybe people have been caught in traffic jams—we've got a little more support for it than we did when I showed up here. I mean, I had Members of Congress come up to me and say, "You're from Arkansas. Why do you care about high-speed rail?" And I said, "Well, I might want to go somewhere else someday." [*Laughter*] "I might want to travel around." But really, we're getting more support. And I ask you for your help on this.

Finally, let me say—a couple of you mentioned this to me going through the line, so I just want to reiterate. For the last several States of the Union, I always save whatever I have to say about one America until the end because it's the most important to me. And if somebody said to me today, "Well,

Mr. President, your time is up on this Earth, and you're not going to get to finish, but we'll give you one wish," I wouldn't wish for the continued economic expansion; I wouldn't wish for even giving everybody health insurance or anything. I'd wish to make America one America, because the American people will figure out how to solve everything else, if we can have the right kind of relations toward one another.

You heard me tell that story—I got the Congress to laughing last night when I referred to what Dr. Ladner, the distinguished geneticist from Harvard, said about all people being genetically 99.9 percent the same. I just want to give you one more thing to think about because we've got a pretty diverse group here. Ladner said that not only are we 99.9 percent the same, but that if you were to take 100 people each and 4 different race groups—like 100 African-Americans, 100 Hispanics, 100 Irish, 100 Jewish-Americans—the genetic differences among individuals within the group are greater than the genetic differences between the groups as a whole.

I mean, it's really quite stunning. The different skin color, the different characteristics that we've all developed over many thousands of years for all kinds of reasons are literally contained in one-tenth of 1 percent of our genetic make-up. And it's a statistic that I've put out there on purpose, because I think you could tell—the Members of Congress, a lot of them, were shocked to hear that. [*Laughter*] They thought there was a Republican gene and a Democratic gene. [*Laughter*] And whichever party they were in, they were glad they got the right chip, you know. [*Laughter*]

And so I hope—you can make a lot of jokes out of this, and you can have a lot of fun with it, and the more you laugh, the more you get it. [*Laughter*]

So I ask you to remember that and to remember that you have people in this White House who believe in you and what you're doing, wish you well, and want to help.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver, CO; Mayor H. Brent Coles of Boise, ID; Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans, LA; Mayor Charles W. Scholz of Quincy, IL; Mayor Patrick Henry Hays of North Little Rock, AR; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, IL; President Andres Pastrana of Colombia; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

January 22

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, from Los Angeles, CA.

January 27

The President announced his intention to nominate Nancy Killefer to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board.

The President announced the nomination of Edward B. Montgomery as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Labor.

The President announced his intention to reappoint Beverly White and appoint Phyllis C. Borzi as members of the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

January 28

In the morning, the President traveled to Quincy, IL.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, and in the evening, he traveled to Zurich, Switzerland, arriving the following morning.

The President declared a major disaster in Georgia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm on January 22 and continuing.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted January 24

Alan Greenspan,
of New York, to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Edward B. Montgomery,
of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor, vice Kathryn O'Leary Higgins, resigned.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released January 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released January 25

Statement by the Press Secretary on the release of Low Income Home Energy Assistance emergency funds

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the White House State of the Union website

Released January 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released January 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Chief of Staff John Podesta, Deputy Chief of Staff Maria Echaveste, National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Planning Bruce Reed, and National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the State of the Union Address

Released January 28

Transcript of remarks by Chief of Staff John Podesta to the pool on the State of the Union Address

Acts Approved by the President

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.