

States, do hereby proclaim April 2000 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by demonstrating our gratitude to those who work to keep our children safe, and by taking action in our own communities to make them healthy places where children can grow and thrive.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 5. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on House Inaction on Extending the Energy Policy and Conservation Act

March 31, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker:

While the U.S. economy is the strongest it has ever been and inflation and unemployment remain at historically low levels, high oil prices have caused concern for many Americans. As a short-term measure, my Administration urged oil-producing nations to take steps to narrow the gap between worldwide production and consumption of crude oil in order to preserve sustained worldwide economic growth. Our focused diplomatic efforts helped produce tangible commitments by oil-producing nations to increase production to more appropriate levels that reflect current demand in the global economy.

While my Administration has worked hard to increase the supply of oil on the market, the House has failed to take one of the most critical steps necessary to maintain America's energy security—an extension of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA), which includes authority to operate the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), authority that expires today. The option to use the SPR is

an essential line of defense against an interruption in oil supplies. Although the Senate passed a four-year straight reauthorization of EPCA, the House has failed to act. It is critical that the House reauthorize EPCA immediately to ensure that the United States maintains its ability to use all available tools to respond to the needs of the U.S. economy.

In addition, Congress should address other energy measures. Congress should pass my comprehensive tax package, which includes new tax incentives for domestic oil producers to reduce U.S. reliance on oil imports, as well as other incentives to promote energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy that Congress has failed to enact. Congress should also fully fund the more than \$1.4 billion that I have requested in my fiscal year 2001 Budget and 2000 Supplemental to promote energy security through the use of domestic energy technologies, including more efficient homes and buildings, a new generation of more efficient vehicles, renewable energy sources, and natural gas.

Finally, I have proposed the establishment of a regional home heating oil reserve in the Northeast to reduce the likelihood of future heating oil shortages. Congress should authorize a reserve with an appropriate trigger to release heating oil to the market in the event of a supply shortage. I have directed the Department of Energy to begin the appropriate environmental reviews of the proposal to determine the correct approach to creating this reserve.

These critical steps will strengthen the sound, comprehensive energy strategy that has helped sustain the longest economic expansion in American history. They will enhance America's energy security, create jobs, protect the environment, and produce long-term savings for consumers. Congress should waste no more time in enacting these measures into law.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 1. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

The President's Radio Address

April 1, 2000

Good morning. Today I want to speak with you about an opportunity to shape the future of our country, and a responsibility we all have to make our voices count. I want to talk about this year's census and the importance of filling out and sending in your census form right away.

The Constitution mandates that our Nation conduct a census every 10 years. The first was taken back in 1790 and was directed by Thomas Jefferson when he served as Secretary of State. Every decade since then, the census has helped tell the story of America—who we are and what we're becoming.

Census 2000 is our chance to write the latest chapter in the unfolding epoch of America. Even though the census is taken only once in a decade, it has an impact on our lives every day. A report I'm releasing today by the Council of Economic Advisers shows just how much we need the census.

We need the census to help decide how almost \$200 billion in Federal funds will be invested in States and communities. We need the census to draw legislative district lines and allocate seats for each State in the U.S. House of Representatives. We need the census to help our hometowns determine where to build everything from roads to schools to hospitals to child care centers. And we need the census to help businesses make decisions about where to invest and help individuals make informed decisions about where to buy a home or take a job.

For all of these reasons, it's important to make sure the first census of the 21st century is fair, accurate, and complete. After all, if we want to make good decisions about where we need to go as a nation, we first have to know where we are.

In the last census, we didn't know where more than 8 million people were. They were left uncounted. Many of them were children, minorities, and low income families. When people are uncounted, their voices are unheard in the Halls of Congress and in their own communities.

Those who suggest that filling out your census form isn't essential are plainly wrong. An inaccurate census distorts our under-

standing of a community's needs, denies people their fair share of resources, and diminishes the quality of life not only for them but for all of us. If we believe everybody in our American community counts, we simply must make sure everyone is counted.

That's an enormous undertaking. This year's census represents the largest peacetime mobilization in American history, involving hundreds of thousands of local census takers and community volunteers. But the most important person in the process is you.

I want to thank the millions of Americans who have sent in their forms. As of today, we're halfway there. But we must do better. We need the most accurate picture of America in the dawn of the 21st century.

So today I'm issuing a proclamation declaring this Census Day and urging all Americans to take a little time this weekend to fill out and send in your form. I've also issued a memorandum to all Federal employees urging them to do the same. Having completed our census form, I can tell you it only takes a few moments.

You can also fill out your census form online, as the Vice President did just recently. The on-line form can be found at www.2000.census.gov. It won't take long. The short form is the shortest since 1820. The long form is the shortest in history. And every question on both forms was reviewed by Congress 2 years ago.

But more important, information from the long form is critical for everything from helping communities design mass transit systems to providing 911 emergency services. It also helps us calculate cost of living increases for Social Security, military retirement, and veterans' pensions.

I know Americans are concerned about their privacy, and that's why I also want to stress that the information you provide is strictly, absolutely confidential. Individual information will not be available to anyone outside the Census Bureau for any reason.

So whether you have a long or a short form, please fill it out completely and send it in promptly. America is counting on you. This is your future. Don't leave it blank.

Thanks for listening.