

So I ask you to pray for us. I went to church last Sunday where Hillary and I always go, at the Foundry Methodist Church, and the pastor gave a sermon on Romans 12:16–21 and a few other verses. But I'm going to quote the relevant chapters. "Do not be wise in your own estimation." It's hard to find anybody here that can fit that. "Never pay back evil for evil to anyone." "If possible, so far, as it depends upon you, be at peace with all men." "Never take your own vengeance." "If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink." "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Pray for the people in public office that we can rid ourselves of this toxic atmosphere of cynicism and embrace with joy and gratitude this phenomenal opportunity and responsibility before us. Do not forget people in the rest of the world who depend upon the United States for more than exhortation, and most of all, remember that in every Scripture of every faith, there are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of admonitions not to forget those among us who are poor. They are no longer entitled to a handout, but they surely deserve, and we are ordered to give them, a hand up.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:28 a.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Bill Barrett, chairman, 1997 National Prayer Breakfast; Dr. Ben Carson, director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital; and Doug Coe, who helped organize the event.

Remarks Announcing the Fiscal Year 1998 Budget

February 6, 1997

Good morning. In my State of the Union Address, I issued a call to action to prepare our people for the 21st century. I said that to do that we first had to finish the unfinished business of America, beginning with balancing the budget.

Today I am submitting to Congress my plan to balance the budget by 2002. It will spur economic growth, promote education and our other priorities, and eliminate the

Federal deficit for the very first time in three decades. I am proud of this budget, and I want to thank the people here on the economic team who worked with me on it. Thank you.

For too many years, it seemed as if our deficit would grow forever, that there was nothing we could do about it. As a result, our economy and our people suffered. Four years ago, I took office with a plan to reduce the deficit in half in 4 years, as we invested in our people. In fact, the deficit has been cut by nearly two-thirds, from \$290 billion in 1992 to \$107 billion in 1996. That makes it, as a proportion of our economy, the smallest of any major nation in the world.

Our economy, therefore, has gotten stronger. It's the strongest it's been in a generation. The American people have produced over 11 million jobs—that's the most ever in a single Presidential term—along with record numbers of new businesses and rising incomes.

Finishing this job of balancing the budget will not be easy, but it is vital for the continued health of our economy. Balancing the budget will free up billions of dollars in private investment. It will keep interest rates low, allowing our people to start new businesses, buy a home or a new car. It will prove that when we set our minds to it, we can make our Government live within its means.

My plan balances the budget while maintaining the balance of our values.

First, it eliminates the deficit by 2002 through detailed, difficult cuts in hundreds of Government programs.

Second, it increases investment in education and training to \$51 billion in 1998, a 20 percent increase. It provides tax cuts to help families pay for college, increases Pell grant scholarships for deserving students, advances the America Reads initiative to help every 8-year-old read independently, commits to helping connect every classroom to the Internet by the year 2000. As I said in the State of the Union, education is a key national security issue, and politics should stop at the schoolhouse door.

Third, it provides targeted tax relief for the middle class, to pay for education, health care, to buy and sell a home. It provides a

\$500-per-child tax credit to help families raise their children.

Fourth, it takes critical steps to extend health care to more Americans. It secures the Medicare Trust Fund for 10 years, making necessary reforms to help the program meet these budget targets and also to maintain its fundamental purpose. It will cover as many as 5 million presently uninsured children and help working people who are temporarily between jobs keep their health insurance. For the first time it would fully cover annual mammograms for older women and provide some respite care support for the many families who are caring for a family member with Alzheimer's.

Fifth, it advances our interests as the world's indispensable nation, reversing the downward spiral in international affairs spending, strengthening our ability to promote peace, and fighting global problems like drug trafficking, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation. And this budget meets our responsibilities to the community of nations by the concrete plan to promote reform, pay our bills, and put the United Nations back on sound financial footing.

I support a balanced budget. I am proposing a balanced budget. I do not support a constitutional amendment to balance the budget for reasons I have already outlined. I think it is neither necessary or wise, and it could have numerous unwanted consequences. It could throw our budget into the courts. It could force judges to make decisions they would normally never make and that they know they should not be making. And all that it takes to balance the budget is discipline and action.

I'd also like to say this. We believe our balanced budget plan will keep the budget more or less in balance. And I say that because it's impossible to predict everything that will happen. But based on the projections we now have, we believe we can maintain a balanced budget for more than two decades. So this is not going to be a one-time thing. And Director Raines will talk more about this when he goes through the details. But one of the things I think Americans have been afraid of is that even if we balance the budget, it will be a one-year blip, and then we'll go right back to the same

problems we've had in the past, particularly as the Baby Boomers age and move into the retirement years. We do not believe that is going to happen with this budget.

And Secretary Rubin and Mr. Raines can explain why, and I know you'll want to question them on that, but that is one of the most important findings of the work that we have been doing. We believe we can keep this budget in balance for a good long time.

Finally, let me say this. It is obvious—and most of you have reported on this—that there are still differences between the parties about how we should do this, but I am convinced those differences can be bridged. I have reviewed them in general, at least. I have been very impressed by the cooperative attitude which has been expressed by the leaders of the Republican Party in Congress. Some of the differences we have are truly principle differences, and we'll have to work hard to have an honorable compromise. But I believe that we can do it as long as the Republicans and the Democrats agree that we have to achieve this goal.

We've got the best chance in a generation to do it. The lion's share of the savings that we needed to make from the nightmarish projections we had 4 years ago have been put in place already, and it remains for us to take the last steps. I am confident we will, and I intend to do everything I can—everything I can over the next few months to see that we achieve this goal.

Now, I'd like to ask the Vice President to say a few words, and then we'll follow with Secretary Rubin, Mr. Raines, and however else they want to elucidate the budget.

Mr. Vice President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building.

Message to Federal Workers

February 6, 1997

As I begin my second term as President, I want all of you to know how proud I am of your hard work and accomplishments during the past four years. I came to Washington with a high regard for civil servants, and you have only confirmed that opinion.