

And this year I have proposed a budget that will eliminate the deficit entirely, achieving the first balanced budget in 30 years.

Beyond that, it is projected that the budget will show a sizable surplus in the years to come. I propose that we reserve 100 percent of the surplus until we have taken the necessary measures to strengthen the Social Security system for the 21st century. I am committed to addressing Social Security first, to ensure that all Americans are confident that it will be there when they need it.

Investing in our people. In the new economy, the most precious resource this Nation has is the skills and ingenuity of working Americans. Investing in the education and health of our people will help all Americans reap the rewards of a growing, changing economy. Those who are better educated, with the flexibility and the skills they need to move from one job to another and seize new opportunities, will succeed in the new economy; those who do not will fall behind.

That is why the historic balanced budget agreement I signed into law in 1997 included the largest increase in aid to education in 30 years, and the biggest increase to help people go to college since the G.I. Bill was passed 50 years ago. The agreement provided funds to ensure that we stay on track to help 1 million disadvantaged children prepare for success in school. It provided funding for the America Reads Challenge, with the goal of mobilizing a million volunteers to promote literacy, and it made new investments in our schools themselves, to help connect every classroom and library in this country to the Internet by the year 2000.

The balanced budget agreement created the HOPE scholarship program, to make completion of the 13th and 14th years of formal education as widespread as a high school diploma is today. It offered other tuition tax credits for college and skills training. It created a new Individual Retirement Account that allows tax-free withdrawals to pay for education. It provided the biggest increase in Pell grants in two decades. Finally, it provided more funds so that aid to dislocated workers is more than double what it was in 1993, to help these workers get the skills they need to remain productive in a changing economy.

But we must do more to guarantee all Americans the quality education they need to succeed. That is why I have proposed a new initiative to improve the quality of education in our public schools—through high national standards and national tests, more charter schools to stimulate competition, greater accountability, higher quality teaching, smaller class sizes, and more classrooms.

To strengthen our Nation we must also strengthen our families. The Family and Medical Leave Act, which I signed into law in 1993, ensures that

millions of people no longer have to choose between being good parents and being good workers. The Health Care Portability and Accountability Act, enacted in 1996, ensures that workers can keep their health insurance if they change jobs or suffer a family emergency. We have also increased the minimum wage, expanded the earned income tax credit, and provided for a new \$500-per-child tax credit for working families. To continue making progress toward strengthening families, the balanced budget agreement allocated \$24 billion to provide health insurance to up to 5 million uninsured children—the largest Federal investment in children's health care since Medicaid was created in 1965.

Opening markets and expanding exports. To create more good jobs and increase wages, we must open markets abroad and expand U.S. exports. Trade has been key to the strength of this economic expansion—about a third of our economic growth in recent years has come from selling American goods and services overseas. The Information Technology Agreement signed in 1997 lowers tariff and other barriers to 90 percent of world trade in information technology services.

To continue opening new markets, creating new jobs, and increasing our prosperity, it is critically important to renew fast-track negotiating authority. This authority, which every President of either party has had for the last 20 years, enables the President to negotiate trade agreements and submit them to the Congress for an up-or-down vote, without modification. Renewing this traditional trade authority is essential to American's ability to shape the global economy of the 21st century.

SEIZING THE BENEFITS OF A GROWING, CHANGING ECONOMY

As we approach the 21st century the American economy is sound and strong, but challenges remain. We know that information and technology and global commerce are rapidly transforming the economy, offering new opportunities but also posing new challenges. Our goal must be to ensure that all Americans are equipped with the skills to succeed in this growing, changing economy.

Our economic strategy—balancing the budget, investing in our people, opening markets—has set this Nation on the right course to meet this goal. This strategy will support and contribute to America's strength in the new economic era, removing barriers to our economy's potential and providing our people with the skills, the flexibility, and the security to succeed. We must continue to maintain the fiscal discipline that is balancing the budget, to invest in our people and their skills, and to lead the world to greater prosperity in the 21st century.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, February 10, 1998.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. CHAFEE, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works:

Sallyanne Harper, of Virginia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Environmental Protection Agency.

Donald J. Barry, of Wisconsin, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife.

(The above nominations were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed, subject to the nominees' commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.)

By Mr. ROTH, from the Committee on Finance:

Michael B. Thornton, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court for a term of fifteen years after he takes office.

Donald C. Lubick, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

L. Paige Marvel, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court for a term of fifteen years after she takes office.

Richard W. Fisher, of Texas, to be Deputy United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador.

(The above nominations were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed, subject to the nominees' commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. BREAUX:

S. 1620. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain textile machinery; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRAMS:

S. 1621. A bill to provide that certain Federal property shall be made available to States for State use before being made available to other entities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. BROWNBACK (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. Con. Res. 73. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the European Union is unfairly restricting the importation of United States agriculture products and the elimination of such restrictions should be a top priority in trade negotiations with the European Union; to the Committee on Finance.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BREAUX:

S. 1620. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain textile machinery; to the Committee on Finance.