I have signed the Treasury-Postal and Legislative Branch appropriations bills. In addition, the Department of Defense is recalling to work the people who staff Armed Forces Recruiting Centers. And the Department of Housing and Urban Development is recalling employees who process public housing funds.

Last Friday, I took steps that resulted in furloughed employees being recalled to work to process Social Security and Medicare claims and accept applications for veterans benefits. Earlier in the week, I signed the funding bill for the Department of Transportation. All told, these actions bring back to work over 200,000 of the 800,000 Federal employees who were furloughed last week.

These bipartisan bills mark real progress in our efforts to fully reopen the Government so it can serve the American people. I am determined that we should fully reopen the Government. Then we can openly and fairly decide the best way to balance the Federal budget while protecting Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment.

Statement on the National Crime Rates
November 19, 1995

The continued decline in our national crime rate shows that the efforts by citizens and their police are making a difference. My 1994 crime bill's putting 100,000 cops on the street, taking assault weapons off the street, and cracking down on violent drug crimes. Today, all Americans must double their efforts to eliminate the scourge of juvenile violence from our communities. This will only be accomplished by more parents teaching their children right from wrong.

Remarks Announcing an Agreement To Reopen the Federal Government and an Exchange With Reporters
November 19, 1995

The President. Good evening. As you know, an agreement has been reached to reopen our Government beginning tomorrow. The bill I have agreed to sign will allow our Government to once again begin to serve the American people while broader discussions about how best to balance the budget take place.

I have made clear from the beginning my principles in this budget debate. We must balance the budget, but we must do it in a way that is good for our economy and that maintains our values. That means we have to do it without devastating cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, in education and the environment. And we have to do it without raising taxes on working families.

This agreement reflects my principles. And for the first time, the Republican leaders in Congress have acknowledged the importance of those principles. As I have said throughout this debate, I could only agree to move forward if that occurred.

Tonight represents the first sign of their willingness to move forward without forcing unacceptable cuts in health care, education, and the environment on the American people. The Republican budget which was passed just yesterday clearly does not come close to meeting that test; as I have said repeatedly, therefore I will veto that budget.

As you know, I have expressed strong doubts that the budget can be balanced in 7 years if we use the current Republican congressional budget assumptions. But I am nevertheless committed to working in the coming weeks to see if we can reach common ground on balancing the budget. The key is that nothing will be agreed to unless all elements are agreed to. I simply cannot sign a budget that devastates Medicare to the elderly or Medicaid to senior citizens and disabled people and poor children, that robs educational opportunity or educational standards from our children in the future, or that hurts our environment. And I can't support a tax increase on working families.

Well, tomorrow the Government will go back to work. And now the debate will begin in earnest on how to balance the budget in a way that is consistent with the interests and the values of the American people.

I appreciate the work that was done by both Democrats and Republicans tonight. I applaud the leadership. I applaud the leaders of the budget committee. I applaud all of them for the work that they did. This is the way our Government ought to work. We ought to be able to find common ground,