

100,000 teachers in these schools, so the kids can have smaller classes. And they're not for that. We believe we ought to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights and have a Medicare drug benefit that benefits all seniors, and they're not for that, because their interest groups won't let them be.

And there's a clear choice here. Whether it's the minimum wage, the hate crimes bill, the employment nondiscrimination bill, the extraordinary efforts I'm proud to say our administration has made to try to support the Native American communities. In every single instance, their leadership has been in one place; we've been somewhere else.

So you've just got to decide here. And you need to talk to people who tell you, "Well, it may not make a difference." It does make a difference. It makes a huge difference. Somebody tells you one Senate seat doesn't make a difference, you tell them America would still be in the budget hole and still be in the economic hole if it hadn't been for every single House seat and every single Senate seat where we had the people voting for you. And Maria Cantwell was one of them, and she would be a brilliant United States Senator.

And so I'm just telling you, I have done everything I could do to turn our country around, to pull our people together, to move our Nation forward. But now we have to decide, what are we going to do with the prosperity? You know, people took a chance on me in 1992. I don't know how many people in Washington State walked into the polling place and said, "I wonder if I ought to vote for that guy." [Laughter] "You know, he's pretty young, and the President," the then-President, "said he's just the Governor of a small southern State." I was so naive, I thought that was a compliment. [Laughter] And I still do. But you know, it wasn't that big a chance, because, I mean, the country was in a ditch. We had to do something different, right?

So now we're in good shape, but we have to figure out, how are we going to include the people who still aren't part of this prosperity? How are we going to give all of our kids an excellent education? How are we going to provide access to health care for people who don't have it? What are we going

to do with the aging of America, when there's only two people working for every one person on Social Security? We have big challenges here. And we get to decide.

But make no mistake about it. The differences are just as stark and just as clear as they were 8 years ago. And the stakes, if anything, are higher. Maybe once every 50 years a country gets to do what we can do now, where you don't have an external threat, an internal crisis, things are going in the right direction, and you get to paint the future of your dreams for you children and grandchildren. Once in a blue moon this happens.

And you need visionary people who understand how to be fair to everybody, how to make the economy work, but make it work for everybody. And you know, there aren't many people with the unique background and achievements that Maria has presenting themselves for public office. And there aren't many people who can stand here and tell you—and I'm telling you—that they were the deciding vote that turned this country around.

And if you like where Washington is today better than you liked it 8 years ago, there is no choice. You've got to make sure she wins this election. Send her to the Senate.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:33 p.m. in the Fifth Avenue Room at the Westin Hotel. In his remarks, the President referred to Republican Presidential nominee Gov. George W. Bush. Maria Cantwell is a candidate for the U.S. Senate from Washington. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Signing the Third Continuing Resolution for Fiscal Year 2001

October 14, 2000

Two weeks ago the fiscal 2000 budget year ended. Since then, I have had to sign two short-term continuing resolutions to keep the Government open. Yet Congress has yet to complete and send me 8 of 13 spending bills. Last night I signed another one-week extension. Let me serve notice now: If Congress fails to meet this deadline, any further extensions must be at most for a very few days.

Congress needs to finish its work and send me a budget. It should be a budget that is fiscally responsible, that reflects the values of the American people, and that invests in the future, especially in the education of our children.

I sent such a budget to Congress in February. Among other things, my budget calls for tax credits to help communities build or modernize 6,000 schools, and grants and loans for emergency repairs in 5,000 schools a year for 5 years. The need is undeniable. The average American school building is now more than 40 years old. At least 60 percent of the schools in every State are in need of repair, and some schools actually pose health risks to students. I received a letter yesterday from some of the Nation's top health organizations, including the American Lung Association and the National Association of School Nurses. They point out that in many of our older school buildings, the air is polluted with lead, radon gas, and other substances harmful to our children's health.

These groups endorse my proposal to rebuild and repair our schools. A bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives is ready right now to pass school construction tax credits. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership continues to stand in the way and refuses to bring it to a vote. It's time for Congress to act. It's unfair to ask America's children to lift themselves up in school buildings that are falling down.

The majority party's education budget also fails to make other vital investments in education. It does not ensure the hiring of another 20,000 teachers to reduce class sizes. It denies after-school to over 1.6 million children who would get it under my balanced budget proposal. It shortchanges efforts to improve teacher quality. And it invests nothing to help States turn around failing schools or shut them down and reopen them under new management.

The continuing resolution I signed last night gives Congress 7 more days to act. That is enough time to pass a responsible budget that modernizes our schools, strengthens accountability, lowers class sizes, expands after-school, mentoring, and college opportunities for young people, and helps put a qualified teacher in every classroom. It should also be

a budget that puts more police on the street, that enforces civil rights, ensures equal pay, expands health care, and creates opportunities for all Americans to share in our strong economy through our new markets initiative.

At this time of unprecedented prosperity, there is no reason we can't put partisanship aside and make the investments we know will move our Nation forward, especially in the education of our children. By building stronger schools, we'll build a stronger America in the future.

NOTE: H.J. Res. 111, approved October 13, was assigned Public Law No. 106-306.

Proclamation 7365—National Character Counts Week, 2000

October 14, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The term "character" is derived from an ancient Greek word meaning "to inscribe," reflecting the conviction that character is not innate, but rather is instilled through the influence, example, and guidance of the people around us. One of our greatest responsibilities as adults and citizens, therefore, is to ensure that we teach our children, by word and deed, the values that will help them develop into men and women of strong character.

This vital endeavor begins with the family and particularly with parents, who are their children's first teachers. The process continues in our schools—not only in the classroom, but also in the hallways, in the cafeteria, and on the playing field. We have many opportunities to instill in our children the elements of good character—citizenship, fairness, compassion, honesty, tolerance, and responsibility—and it is up to every citizen and organization to make the most of these opportunities.

My Administration has strived to assist parents, caregivers, teachers, and religious and community leaders in this vital effort. We have worked with the entertainment industry to increase educational programming on television and to create a voluntary ratings