

And yes, I am subdued. I'm frustrated, and I'm very sad because I don't want any more kids to die. And I want them to come here on Mother's Day, and I told them before you came in here that if they didn't get tired, they'd win this fight. I've been watching these kinds of issues all my life, and it's like civil rights or something where there's this huge organized resistance. But if they just keep at it, they're going to win.

I think they should have won more already, and I'm going to do what I can to help them.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs David Levi of Israel; and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Richard C. Holbrooke. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the District of Columbia Courts' Budget Request

May 8, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the District of Columbia Code, as amended, I am transmitting the FY 2001 Budget Request of the District of Columbia Courts.

The District of Columbia Courts have submitted a FY 2001 budget request for \$104.5 million for operating expenses, \$18.3 million for capital improvements to courthouse facilities, and \$41.8 for Defender Services in the District of Columbia Courts. My FY 2001 budget includes recommended funding levels of \$98.0 million for operations, \$5.0 million for capital improvements, and \$38.4 million for Defender Services. My transmittal of the District of Columbia Courts' budget request does not represent an endorsement of its contents.

This transmittal also includes information on grants and reimbursements forwarded by the Courts in response to the request in Conference Report H. Rept. 106-479.

I look forward to working with the Congress throughout the FY 2001 appropriation process.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 8, 2000.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Baron P. Hill in Bethesda, Maryland

May 8, 2000

Thank you. Well, I want to thank, first of all, Joe and Anne, for having us in their beautiful home on this beautiful spring night. And I want to thank Baron's colleagues Charlie Stenholm from Texas and Stenny Hoyer from Maryland for coming. They represent, I think, the future of the Democratic Party and where we have to go, and they've proved that you can get elected in places where sometimes we don't get elected. I also want to thank your predecessor, Lee Hamilton, for being here. He's one of the greatest House Members in my lifetime, and I thank him for what he is doing. And I want to thank, in his absence, Senator Bayh.

Evan met me at the door, and he said Susan was out of town, and he had two choices: He could stay and hear me give this speech, or he could go home and tuck his kids in bed. And I said, "You've heard the speech"—[*laughter*]"—and you'll never regret a minute you stay with your children." My daughter is about to be a senior in college, and I can still remember all the nights I tucked her in bed, and she can remember anything she ever did that I missed. [*Laughter*] Even though she can count them on one hand and have fingers left over, at 20 years old she can still remember. So he went home, as he should have. And since he's not here, I won't be embarrassing him when I tell you that I hope and expect some day I'll be voting for Evan Bayh for President of the United States.

I want to say just a few things, and I won't keep you long. I want to get out and say hello to the people I haven't seen yet. The country is in good shape, and I'm grateful for that.

And I'm grateful for the time I've had to serve and the opportunities we've had. And certainly not in my lifetime, and maybe never in the history of America, have we had at the same time such a strong economy with benefits more evenly distributed. We have inequality coming down in the last 2 years for the first time in over 20 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest single-parent poverty rate in 46 years.

We've got—the crime rate, we just said yesterday, has come down now 8 years in a row. We've got the lowest crime rate in over a quarter century, the lowest murder rate in 30 years. We have almost—the welfare rolls are about half the size they were when I took office. Things are moving in the right direction. Ninety percent of our children immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time.

I thank you for the applause you gave when Baron talked about the economy and our role in it. But what I would like to say is—people come up to me all the time and they say, "Well, thank you, and I wish you could run again." Half the country is probably elated that I can't, but it's nice when the people that say it, say it.

But here's what I want to say to you. A President is important. It's important to be able to articulate what you believe. It's important to be able to touch people where they live. It's important for people to think that the person in the Oval Office cares about them. It's important that you fight hard for the things you believe in.

But if you don't believe in the right things, you still won't get good results. That's why I'm here tonight. I like Baron Hill. I've liked him from the first time I met him. I admire him. But I think that the direction that we took—first our party and then our country, beginning in the '92 election—is profoundly important. And the major question before the American people this year is, what are we going to do with our good fortune? Yes, the surplus but, generally, what are we going to do with our good fortune?

And normally, the question asked in a campaign determines who wins. That is, what people think the election is about very often

determines the outcome of the election. And I believe with all my heart the answer to that question is not that we should indulge ourselves but that we should take on the big challenges and the big opportunities that are still out there. Because most of what I've had to do the last 7 years and some odd months is to try to turn the ship of state around and get us going in the right direction and, to use the metaphor I used in the '96 campaign, build our bridge to the 21st century.

Now the country has a chance that we've never had before to literally build the future of our dreams for our children. We almost had it in the 1960's, and it came apart over the combined impacts of the civil rights struggle and the Vietnam war and the divisions that ensued in the country and the collapse of the economic recovery of that decade.

So if the question is what are we going to do with the good times and the answer is take on the big challenges and the big opportunities, then the issue is, how? And I would argue that what we need to do is to continue to change based on what we call the New Democratic philosophy. We believe that you can be pro-business and pro-labor. We believe you can be pro-growth and pro-environment. We believe you can be pro-work and pro-family. We believe you can be pro-trade and pro-labor and human rights.

And I don't want to give a long speech about that, but I would like to cite two examples because they reflect Baron Hill's career, brief as it is, already distinguished in Congress. One is this trade issue. I believe that any fair reading of the record would say that I'm the most pro-labor President, at least since Lyndon Johnson. I believe that is fair. But my belief in trade is rooted in two things.

Number one, we've got 4 percent of the world's people and 22 percent of the world's income, and I don't think you have to be a rocket scientist to figure out if you want to keep over 20 percent of the world's income, you've got to sell something to the other 96 percent of the people. And you have responsibilities to them. You want them to do better, so you have to let them sell stuff to you.

Secondly, I think it's good for us in other ways. Imports—nobody ever talks about that,

but because we've had open markets, we've been able to grow without inflation. When I was elected President, after the election we had a big economic parlay down in Little Rock, and I had a private meeting in the Governor's Mansion, and I had Democratic economists—that is, they were more progressive; they wanted to believe we could have low unemployment without inflation.

So I said, "How low can unemployment get on a sustained basis without inflation?" And the consensus was 6 percent, maybe 5.8—you get below that, you're going to have inflation. It was 3.9 last month, with core inflation at 2.4 percent.

Now, if you want growth without inflation, you have to keep your markets open so there is some pressure on keeping the prices down. In a larger sense, because we're the most prosperous country in the world now, when we trade with others, it helps us to build friends and allies and promote democracy and stability and keep our kids from ever having to go to war again.

And that's really what this China issue is all about. A lot of you are here because you know that it's a lay down, economically, in the short run, because we don't have to give China any more access to our markets, and they give us lots of access to theirs. We can put up car dealerships there for the first time. We can sell American cars without having to let them manufacture them in China or transfer technology. We have all kinds of agricultural access we never had before.

But in a larger sense, what this is really about to me, having focused on the economy like a laser beam, is national security. Because China is the biggest country in the world, and in somewhere between 30 and 50 years, it'll have the biggest economy, unless India outstrips it, which is conceivable. And when that happens, are we going to have a working relationship with them, or is it going to be a new cold war?

Meanwhile, we want them to grow more open. I don't like the human rights abuses that exist there. But if we say no to them, we'll have no influence on their policies, because they think we're trying to stiff them. They'll get in the World Trade Organization anyway, but the Europeans will get all the trade benefits we negotiated and I fought for

a year for. And I think the chances that there will be trouble between China and Taiwan will go up exponentially if the United States says no. I've already had to send carrier groups to the Taiwan Straits once, and I don't want to do it again. I will if I have to, but I don't want to do it again.

If somebody were to ask—people are always asking me, "Now, what have you learned as President. What can you tell somebody else?" The one thing I learned about foreign policy is it's a lot more like real life than I thought it was. I mean, if you hear people talk about it, they always use these complicated words and all that. It's a lot more like real life. Nine times out of 10 you can get more with an outstretched hand than you can with a clenched fist, just like in real life. You never want to let your guard down, but you want to give people a chance to do the right thing, just like real life.

And this is a big issue. And he took a brave position, and I want to be here to support him for it. And a decade from now, if we prevail, we'll wonder why we had the debate. And if we don't, we'll still be paying the price.

One of the terrible things about public life is that sometimes you have to make tough decisions. I got so tickled—I read an article yesterday saying that I had real good approval ratings, and if it hadn't been for the bad approval ratings I had in '93 and '94, I'd have the highest average approval ratings of any President since they've been taking polls. And I thought, well—I showed it to Hillary and she said, "Sure, in '93 and '94 we made all the hard decisions that gave us the good approval ratings later." [Laughter]

You know, even in good economic times, life doesn't give you 100 percent easy decisions. So he's taking a tough decision. It's the right decision for America, and I respect it.

The second thing I want to mention is education, because education will be a big subject of debate, as it should be, in this election. And education has now become like God, motherhood, and apple pie. Everybody is for it. But we had a strategy, and Baron Hill has come in to support a very part of that. Our strategy was, set high standards, have accountability, identify schools that are failing, require them to turn around or shut down,

stop social promotion, but don't blame the kids for the failure of the system, give them the help they need to succeed.

And he's been especially active in promoting small, effective schools. I just want to tell you just two points about this and why it's so important.

The Republicans, from Governor Bush on down, they're going to say they're for education. And they're going to say a lot of good things. And he'll be able to cite some things that happened in Texas. But here's the problem with their proposal. Their tax cut is so big and their defense increases are even bigger than the ones I proposed, and if you put those two things with their voucher proposal, there won't be any money left to do what they say they're going to do in education. And somehow we've got to get that out to the American people.

The other point I want to make to you is this. When I became President, one of the things that frustrated me was a lot of people just didn't think things could get better. I mean, if I had run for President and I said, "Now, you vote for me, and sometime in my second term, instead of having a \$300 billion deficit we'll be paying down the debt," the voters would have said in '92, "He seems like such a nice young man, but he's slightly derailed. We better send him home." [*Laughter*]

When I leave office, we will have paid off \$355 billion of the national debt. So if I said to you, "Crime will go down every year in my administration," you would have said the same thing. If I said, "I'll cut the welfare rolls in half, or we will together," you would have said the same thing.

What's the point of this? We now know it can get better. What I want you to understand is that public education can get better. I've been working on this over 20 years now. And Hillary and I put through this big education reform program in 1983, and we thought we knew what we were doing. But I can tell you that we now know more than we have ever known. And I just want to cite three things that are important to our philosophy, in the education tour I took last week.

I went to St. Paul, Minnesota, to the Nation's first charter school. It's a public school with public funds set up outside the normal

bureaucratic rules of a school system so that it can serve a specific population or have a special mission. The first charter school in the country, in St. Paul, was the only one that existed when I started running for President promoting charter schools and nobody in America knew what I was talking about.

But I went to that school. There are over 100 kids in this high school. They all showed up. They were all kids that had not done well in other schools. A lot of them had had terrible, terrible problems in their personal lives, the kind of things that most of us would find it difficult to overcome. They're in school. There's no dropout rate. There's no violence in the school. There are no weapons in the school. The kids are learning; an extraordinary percentage of them are going on to college. It is working. And there are now 1,700 of those schools in America today. There are long waiting lists. Some of them have failed. But unlike other schools that have failed, they can be just shut down; you just revoke the charter.

And I'll give you just two other examples. I went to Columbus, Ohio. And Columbus has gotten 55 of our teachers under our 100,000 teachers program to lower class size in the early grades. They took class size from 24 to 15 in the first three grades. And I went to this very poor neighborhood, to this elementary school where in one year—one year—they went from 10 percent of their kids reading at or above grade level to 45 percent, from 10 percent of their kids doing math at or above grade level to 33 percent, from 10 percent of their kids doing science at or above grade level to 30 percent—in one year.

I went to Owensboro, Kentucky, where in 1996 Kentucky was one of the first States to implement the requirement we got the Congress to pass that anybody got Federal aid, the States, had to identify their failing schools. They identified 170. Within 2 years, 91 percent of them weren't failing anymore.

Now today, in this Owensboro school, in 3 years, here's what they did. They went from 12 percent of their kids reading at or above grade level to 57 percent, 5 percent doing math at or above grade level to 70 percent, 0 percent doing science at or above grade level to 64 percent. They're the 18th best

grade school in the State of Kentucky, and two-thirds of the kids are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Of the 20 grade schools in that State that scored highest on the test, 10 of them—10 of them—have kids where at least half of them are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Race and income and location are not destiny if you have good schools. That's what we believe. That's the second reason I'm here—because I think if our crowd stays in control of the education policy of this country, we will have further excellence.

And Al Gore has laid out an education plan that will enable us to hire more teachers—and there are going to be 700,000 retiring in the next few years, with the biggest student population we ever had—and have higher standards and put every kid who needs it in preschool and every child who needs it will have access to an after-school program and a summer school program.

That is worth fighting an election on. That is the whole history of the country. And what Americans must believe is, just like we got the deficit gone and we're paying down the debt, just like we have got the crime rate down, just like we have got the welfare rolls down, all of our schools can become excellent schools and all of our kids can learn. That's the second reason I'm here, and that's worth fighting this election on. That's what our party ought to be standing for.

So if somebody asks you why you came, say because the election ought to be fought out over what are we going to do with the good times. The answer is we're going to take on the big challenges. And the way to do it is to keep changing, based on the philosophy that has brought us to this point. And no person in the House of Representatives, in my judgment, better embodies that than Baron Hill.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee, and his wife, Anne; Senator Bayh's wife, Susan; former Representative Lee H. Hamilton; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks on Permanent Normal Trade Relations Status for China

May 9, 2000

Thank you very much, President Ford, President Carter, Mr. Vice President, Secretary Albright, Secretary Baker, Secretary Kissinger, all the distinguished people that the Vice President acknowledged. Many of you did not stand. We have so many distinguished leaders of Congress here. I would be remiss if I didn't thank our former Speaker, Tom Foley, and our former minority leader, Bob Michel, because they helped me pass NAFTA and the WTO, and I'm grateful to both of you. Thank you. We have former House Foreign Relations Chairman Lee Hamilton, former Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Chuck Percy.

There's one person in this room I have to introduce. I wish all of you could have been sitting where we were today, and I was scanning this room, realizing that through the lives of the people in this room, the last 50 years of America has unfolded. And we're a better country because of what you have all done, and it's a better world. And it is just profoundly humbling for me to look across this sea of faces who are here. I was so glad the Vice President said what he did about it. But there's one person here I want to recognize because I'm quite sure he is the senior statesman here, and through his life, most of the 20th century unfolded, former Ambassador and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield. Thank you, sir, for being here. Thank you.

You have already heard what needs to be said about this, so I'm going to try to abbreviate my remarks and focus on what is at issue here. If you look at the terms of this agreement on purely economic grounds, there's no question that Ambassador Barshefsky and Mr. Sperling did a great job. And if the Congress declines to approve this, I will not block China going into the WTO. So what will happen? The Europeans and the Japanese will get the benefits they negotiated under the rules.

If you look at who's against this in America, it is truly ironic to look at who's against this in China. Nobody's really talked about that. Not everybody's for this in China. Who's