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Budget Statement 10/29/99

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Final 10/29/99 10am

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

PARAGRAPH ON BUDGET

PHILADELPHIA, PA

October 29, 1999

*Budget Stmt
10/29/99*

This morning, I signed another one-week Continuing Resolution to keep the government running until next Friday. This is no way to do the business of the American people. Again, I urge the Congress to roll up its sleeves, make the tough choices, and produce a final budget that honors our commitments and meets our highest priorities – 100,000 teachers, 50,000 police officers, and real protections for our environment.

It's time to put progress over partisanship. To stop the gimmicks and smoke and mirrors that are intended to hide the fact that the Congressional majority is spending the Social Security surplus. And it's time to stop avoiding tough decisions with measures like their across-the-board cuts that could have a devastating impact on the American people.

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Revised Final 10/25/99 4:45pm

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PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

REMARKS ON THE BUDGET

THE WHITE HOUSE

October 25, 1999

*Budget Statement
10/25/99*

Good afternoon. Last February, I sent Congress a balanced budget that maintains our fiscal discipline. I proposed a budget that pays down the debt, saves Social Security, strengthens and modernizes Medicare, and meets our most pressing priorities – putting 100,000 teachers in our classrooms and another 50,000 community police on our streets; protecting the environment and strengthening our national security. Everything in that budget is paid for – without dipping into the Social Security surplus.

Unfortunately, the congressional majority has rejected that approach. In the eight months since I sent them my balanced budget, they have failed to produce a budget of their own that meets our priorities and honors our values.

Instead, they have moved this way and that, trying one unsuccessful scheme after another; failing, all the while, to move us forward. Now the majority wants an arbitrary, across-the-board cut. Their plan would cut military recruiting, and cut as many as 70,000 men and women from our active forces. Their plan would cut off thousands of children from the benefits of HeadStart. Their plan would cut childhood immunizations, and cut the cleanup of toxic waste. And it would do something they have pledged not to do: with all these cuts, it would still spend the Social Security surplus, as their own Congressional Budget Office has said it would do.

And yet: Congress has somehow seen fit to fund pork-barrel projects, like a ship the Pentagon says it doesn't need and aircraft it didn't ask for.

They have found a way to fund corporate welfare for big oil companies and other special interests; and to fund Congress's own pay raise. **Now, the American people sent us here to make tough choices. But these are the wrong choices. Let me be clear: I will not allow the Congress to raise its own pay, and fund its own pork-barrel projects, while making devastating across-the-board cuts in everything from education to child nutrition to the FBI. I will not sign any budget agreement that puts special interests above the national interest.**

Now, this week, I may be forced to veto several of the majority's appropriations bills because they fail to meet America's most pressing national priorities.

But I have decided to sign into law the Department of Defense Appropriations Bill – because I cannot, in good conscience, allow our national security needs to be held hostage to this budget battle. This legislation provides funding for our most critical military needs, including weapons procurement and modernization, research and development, and, importantly, a much-needed pay raise for our men and women in uniform.

I had proposed the first sustained increase in defense spending in a decade; and this bill will help maintain that. Still, what Congress has sent me is far from perfect. Congress loaded this legislation with things the Pentagon didn't ask for and doesn't need. It applies accounting gimmicks to important areas.

For example, Congress designated the \$7.2 billion for base operations and basic training – something our military needs and depends on every year – as an unforeseen, “emergency” expense.

Despite my reservations, I am signing this bill – because it is crucial to our national security and our military readiness. Because the troops who defend America’s interests abroad deserve the strongest support we can provide here at home.

The second action I am taking is on the appropriations bill for the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce. Today I will veto the bill Congress has sent me.

I will veto this legislation because it fails to fund the additional 50,000 community police we need to keep crime going down in our communities. It fails to provide the funding to give the American people their day in court against the tobacco companies. It fails to take a strong stand – indeed, any stand whatsoever – against hate crimes. And by failing to provide for our obligations, including our United Nations dues and arrears, it imperils not only our vote in the U.N., but also our national security.

The appropriations bill for the Interior Department is no better. If Congress sends it to me in its current form, with provisions that weaken rather than strengthen our environmental protections, I will have to veto that, too.

On Friday, the temporary resolution that keeps the government running will again expire. That's the second such measure to have come and gone. Another week, another deadline, and Congress still has not sent me a budget that pays down the debt, saves Social Security, strengthens and modernizes Medicare, and meets our most important priorities. They have not lived up to their commitment to put 100,000 teachers in our classrooms. They have not provided for another 50,000 community police to keep crime going down in our communities. They have not done what is necessary to protect our environment.

Now, even though time is short, we still have a chance to meet these goals. Today, my budget negotiators are continuing to work with Congress to finish the job. I hope Congress will work with us in good faith, and make this a true season of progress. Thank you.