

America, the economy remains dismal in Africa, and now we are seeing an economic collapse in Asia. I think we need to question the whole concept of the centralized global economy and the role that the IMF is playing.

BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Mr. ALLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, we are back in session and some of the stories in the paper are the same old stories. There are stories about too much money in politics, about investigations that go on and on.

The Washington Post editorial this morning said it well. Many of the Senate Republicans who have criticized the Democratic fund-raising in 1996 will now vote against significant campaign finance reform. We cannot let that happen in the House. We need a campaign finance reform bill on the floor of this House in March. It should be a bipartisan bill.

The Republican majority has been questioned as to whether or not they are really serious about campaign finance reform, but there are some Republican freshmen who have stood with Democratic freshmen to put together a bill, H.R. 2183, the bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act of 1998. It bans soft money, it improves issue advocacy disclosure, it tightens candidate reporting requirements.

That is the bill we ought to bring to the floor of this House, a bipartisan campaign finance reform bill with no poison pills, no effort to get one side or the other, or the backers of one side or the other. We need real campaign finance reform; we need it now.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. UPTON) laid before the House the following communication from the President of the United States:

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, February 10, 1998.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1022, attached is the Economic Report of the President together with the Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

ECONOMIC REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 105-176)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together

with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Joint Economics and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

For the last 5 years this Administration has worked to strengthen our Nation for the 21st century, expanding opportunity for all Americans, demanding responsibility from all Americans, and bringing us together as a community of all Americans. Building a strong economy is the cornerstone of our efforts to meet these challenges.

When I first took office in 1993, the Federal budget deficit was out of control, unemployment was unacceptably high, and wages were stagnant. To reverse this course, we took a new approach, putting in place a bold economic strategy designed to bring down the deficit and give America's workers the tools and training they need to help them thrive in our changing economy.

Our strategy has succeeded: the economy has created more than 14 million new jobs, unemployment is at its lowest level in 24 years, and core inflation is at its lowest level in 30 years. Economic growth in 1997 was the strongest in almost a decade, and the benefits of that growth are being shared by all Americans: poverty is dropping and median family income has gone up nearly \$2,200 since 1993. We also saw the biggest drop in welfare rolls in history. Many challenges remain, but Americans are enjoying the fruits of an economy that is steady and strong.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S ECONOMIC STRATEGY

From the beginning, this Administration's economic strategy has had three crucial elements: reducing the deficit, investing in people, and opening markets abroad.

Deficit reduction. In 1993 this Administration's deficit reduction plan set the Nation on a course of fiscal responsibility, while making critical investments in the skills and well-being of our people. When I took office, the deficit was \$290 billion and projected to go much higher. This year the deficit will fall to just \$10 billion and possibly lower still. That is a reduction of more than 95 percent, leaving the deficit today smaller in relation to the size of the economy than it has been since 1969. 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 inge-

nuity 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 expending 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 negotiation 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 America's ability to shape the global economy of the 21st century.

SEIZING THE BENEFIT 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 the goal. This strategy will support and contribute to America's strength 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.*

RANDOM DRUG TESTING FOR MEMBERS AND STAFF

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I just returned from the Republican Members' retreat at Williamsburg, Virginia, and at that retreat the Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGRICH), unveiled goals for our generation, of which the No. 1 issue is a drug-free America.

To honor that goal, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) and I have been attempting for the last year to institute random drug testing for Members of Congress and their staffs, and the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) and myself intend in the

next month and a half to actually implement the rule that was established at the start of this Congress that there shall be such a random drug testing plan for Members of Congress and their staffs.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to have a drug-free America, the House of Representatives must set the positive example and must take such measures as necessary to ensure that the Congress itself is drug free, and in my opinion, random drug testing must be a part of that plan.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 4 p.m.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 28 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 4 p.m.

□ 1604

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. UPTON) at 4 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2604

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to rule XXII, clause 4, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 2604.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

WELCOME BACK TO MS. HELEN SEWELL

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, as we welcome everybody back, I would like to make note that back in the kitchen, in the Republican cloakroom on this side, we have a wonderful woman who has been an employee of this House of Representatives for more than 65 years. Sixty-five years. She was sick over the break and she has returned in good health and we just want to welcome Mrs. Helen Sewell back. A wonderful, wonderful woman.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 352 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 352

Resolved, That it shall be in order at any time on Wednesday, February 11, 1998, or on

Thursday, February 12, 1998, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules. The Speaker or his designee shall consult with the minority leader or his designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from my State of New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, the rule before us today makes in order at any time on Wednesday, that is today, February 11th, and Thursday, February 12th, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules. The resolution further provides that the Speaker or his designee shall consult with the minority leader or his designee on any suspension considered under this rule.

This rule is necessary in order to provide for the expeditious consideration of some noncontroversial legislation which is before the House this week. It would be impractical to bring this legislation up under separate resolutions from the Committee on Rules.

Mr. Speaker, the majority attempted to work with the minority to reach a unanimous consent agreement to allow for suspensions, that means the expediting of noncontroversial measures today and tomorrow. However, the minority objected to that request, for whatever reason, and without the unanimous consent agreement, this rule is necessary to allow us to take up this legislation today and tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week many Members of both the majority and the minority participated in legislative planning sessions for this coming year. Members used this time to thoughtfully come up with solutions to many of the challenges our Nation faces this year.

Republicans are intent on achieving a drug-free America, which is very, very important to me, make a safer and healthier environment for all of our children and our grandchildren. We plan on providing the best education system for America's students by providing parental choice in education, education savings accounts, and opportunity scholarships for students in the District of Columbia. But above all, we intend to make sure that this Federal Government does not dictate educational curriculum to States and local school districts.

We will also take a careful look at America's retirement system by creating a national commission on retirement, thus providing greater security for the future of our retirement system.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Republicans intend to modernize, we intend to privatize and to downsize government in