

Barbara Jordan was very instrumental in the progress we have made in tightening our border to keep illegal immigrants out and securing our workplace for American citizens and legal immigrants.

In developing a comprehensive system to keep us both a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws, her work was pure Barbara Jordan: fair, principled, and strong. Our Nation has lost a great American, a stateswoman, a representative of the people with a powerful voice and a great spirit. And many of us have lost a friend and an inspiration. We, the people, will greatly miss her.

Now I'd like to talk about our efforts to reach common ground on a balanced budget, a balanced budget that also protects Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment, and does not raise taxes on working families. The budget talks are suspended now because the Republican congressional leaders walked away from the table. I wish they hadn't done that, and I hope they'll come back, and soon, because I believe our goal can be met. After all, we've both agreed on enough savings to balance the budget in 7 years according to the Congress' own estimates, without having to hurt our economy or sacrifice the values that I've talked about.

That's what we ought to do: balance the budget, protect the things we're committed to protect. And we ought not to delay in getting on with the people's business. In less than a week now, the Republican Congress could once again shut down our Government for the third time in 2 months. I urge them not to do that. In the last shutdown alone, the Federal Housing Administration was unable to insure single family home loans for tens of thousands of deserving applicants. Many, many thousands of citizens couldn't get passports. Some veterans couldn't get benefits. Many Medicare claims couldn't be processed. Small businesses—lots of them—couldn't get loans to create new jobs. Environmental cleanup actions were halted.

The shutdown also put hundreds of thousands of Federal workers with families to support under a horrible strain. Like most American workers, most of them live paycheck to paycheck. They simply cannot afford a third shutdown, and they don't deserve it.

Let's remember, since I've been President we have reduced the size of the United States Government by 205,000 employees. Your Government has closed thousands and thousands of

offices, eliminated hundreds of programs. It's now the smallest Federal Government since 1965. As a percentage of our work force, it's the smallest Federal Government since 1933. You probably didn't know that. And one big reason is that the Federal employees who have been left behind are working harder, working smarter, and doing a better job for you. They deserve to be able to do their work and not to be thrown out of work.

Two Government shutdowns so far have cost taxpayers about a billion-and-a-half dollars—a billion-and-a-half dollars. That's not Monopoly money. Shutting down the Government again would be unbelievably irresponsible. So again I say to the Republican Congress, don't do that. We can't afford to bleed money and productivity at a time when we should be putting all our efforts into saving money, serving the American people, strengthening our economy, and moving forward.

I also urge the Congress to deal responsibly with the Federal debt ceiling. Congress should never threaten to default on America's debts. I'm encouraged that Republican leaders have acknowledged that Congress should not put the creditworthiness of the United States at risk in our budget negotiations. And we look forward to working with the congressional leadership to draft a clean debt limit increase, to allow the United States to meet our obligations and maintain our integrity.

I am committed—let me say again, I am committed—to finishing the job of balancing the budget. I have gone the extra mile in our talks. The Republicans asked for a 7-year plan to balance the budget; I gave them a plan. They asked that we use the figures from the Congressional Budget Office. Even though I disagreed with them, I did that, too. I tried every way I can to accommodate Republican demands and bargain in good faith. But there are areas of disagreement, and they involve far more than money. They involve our values and different visions about what kind of people we're going to be and how we're going to get to the next century.

The Republicans insist on cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment that I believe are unwarranted. I know they're not necessary to balance the budget. They admit they're not necessary to balance the budget. And I believe they violate our commitment to our children, our parents, and our future. Among