

Government. The average tax load will decrease by \$2,000—from \$4,000 to \$2,000.

As Debora said, she calculated our plan, and she saved \$1,000. Maybe for some, the number 1,000 doesn't mean much, and maybe for some, 2,000 doesn't mean much. But for thousands of Americans it means a lot.

I want to assure my friends the tax families who are here that we will submit a budget as expected to the United States Congress, a budget that sets aside all the payroll taxes for Social Security, a budget that sets clear priorities, a budget that pays down the national debt, and a budget that has got room for a meaningful, substantial tax reduction.

And there's a lot of talk about debt in this town, and it should be talked about—national debt. And our plan pays down debt. But I also want the Members of Congress to understand that there are a lot of folks struggling to get ahead who have got high consumer debt. There's a lot of people who are burdened by credit card debt in America. And when you couple that debt overhang with high energy prices, more and more of the backbone of this country struggle to save and struggle to get ahead.

So this tax relief package not only is a way to make sure our economy remains strong; it's a package that understands people need to have more of their own money. It says that with strict budgeting and prioritizing our budget, that when we have surpluses, we must remember who pay the bills in America. And it's these folks who pay the bills in this country. And they deserve relief.

And so I call upon Congress, when they think about tax relief, to think about the members of our tax family who represent all the people of our country, who work hard to get into the middle class and to stay in the middle class.

It's an honor to be your President. I'm so thrilled you all are here to say hello to us. I can't wait to greet you inside.

Thanks for coming, and God bless you all.

Tax Relief Legislation

Q. Mr. President, Republican leaders are pushing for an even larger tax cut, sir. Do you think that's advisable?

The President. The tax cut is the right size. I believe it's the right size. And I think it's going to be very important for us and the Members of Congress to work together. But I'm going to make my case that the size of the tax relief package I propose is right.

Q. So you're saying it would be inadvisable, in your judgment, based on looking at the numbers of the surpluses, et cetera?

The President. I think for those who want to diminish the size of the tax cut, that would be inadvisable, and for those who want to increase the size of the tax cut would be inadvisable. It's the right size.

Office of National AIDS Policy

Q. Could you tell us how it is, sir, that your Chief of Staff didn't know what your plans were for the Office of National AIDS Policy and the President's Initiative for One America?

The President. We're going to have a—we're concerned about AIDS inside our White House, make no mistake about it. And ours is an administration that will fight for fair, just law in the country.

Last question.

Middle East

Q. Mr. President, how concerned are you about the outbreak of violence following the election of Ariel Sharon? And also, can you tell us how you might take a different approach than President Clinton and his administration when it comes to Middle East peacemaking?

The President. We're going to play the hand we've been dealt. And we're going to play it well, with one thing in mind, that we promote peace in the Middle East. And I've talked to leaders in the Middle