

ing by his second term in his impeachment over a sex scandal involving a young White House intern, Monica Lewinsky. However, Clinton was tried and acquitted by the U.S. Senate and throughout the ordeal, to the dismay of his Republican detractors, the President's job approval ratings remained high, even though many Americans were embarrassed and embittered by the sordid episode. Clinton's job approval rating on leaving office, according to Gallup, was 66 percent, higher even than Ronald Reagan's high of 63 percent.

Certainly what helped Clinton weather this storm and later leave office on such a high note was the credit he received for his economic stewardship. From 1997 to 2000, the growth rate was over 4 percent; the inflation rate remained below 3 percent; and unemployment remained below 5 percent, dipping down to 4 percent in 2000. The performance of the stock market during the 1990s was so strong that in 1996 the chairman of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, warned investors of an "irrational exuberance." With the retirement plans of so many Americans tied to the performance of the market, these numbers produced a strong overall sense of confidence in the U.S. economy. Moreover, in 1998 the Clinton administration announced that it had produced the first budget surplus since 1969, and that it would begin to pay down the national debt. It said this goal would be achieved by 2012. For the baby boom generation, this meant that as they entered retirement, the government's financial house would be well in order. For all of these reasons, the twentieth century ended with Americans optimistic about the future.

Since the passage of the civil rights acts in the 1960s, the U.S. had made significant progress in the area of race relations, notably with the steady increase in the size of the black middle class, in both absolute and historic terms. In comparative terms, however, the black middle class continued to lag behind its white social counterpart. It was also significant that by 1980 the historic outmigration of blacks from the South to the North, to escape racism and find better economic opportunities, reversed itself, as blacks in the North began moving back to the rural and urban South. However, the race riot that broke out in Los Angeles, California, in 1992, which claimed 52 lives and \$446 million in property damage and which resulted in 6,559 arrests, seemed to call this progress into question. In 1993, in his first year in office as president, Clinton addressed the issue of race in America (Document 31-3). He spoke in Memphis, Tennessee, at the Mason Temple, a black church where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his last sermon.

The end of the Cold War had a disproportionate effect on the western United States. The economy of this region had been buoyed by defense spending and the existence of numerous military bases since World War II. Thus, the reductions in defense spending and the closure of bases that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union hit the West especially hard, in particular California's economy, which alone is larger than all but eight other nations. The recession of 1990–1991 was deeper in California and the recovery afterward took longer there. The bad economy formed the backdrop for the passage of Proposition 187 (Document 31-4).

31-3 *Contract with America* (1994)

In 1994, the Republicans captured the House of Representatives (for the first time since 1952) and the Senate (control of which they had lost in 1986). The *Contract with America* had provided the Republicans with a single campaign tract for midterm House races across the nation. That representatives Newt Gingrich (Georgia) and Dick Armey (Texas) were prominent among the drafters of the contract reflected the southernization of the Republicans' congressional delegation. As late as 1960, Republicans held no Senate seats and only 7 of the 106 House seats from the eleven former Confederate states. In 1998, Republicans occupied 15 of the 22 seats in the Senate and 71 of the 125 in the House from these states.

Gingrich and Armey, already prominent in the House, rose to power following the GOP victory—Gingrich as Speaker, Armey as majority leader. However, Gingrich's fierce

partisanship ultimately hurt the Republicans. The attempt to remove Clinton from office over a sex scandal backfired. In the 1998 midterm elections, the GOP lost seats, calling Gingrich's leadership into question. He subsequently announced his resignation as Speaker and left Congress.

Source: Republican National Committee, *Contract with America: The Bold Plan by Representative Newt Gingrich, Representative Dick Armey, and the House Republicans to Change the Nation*, Ed Gillespie and Bob Schellhas, eds. (New York: Times Books, 1994), 1–11. Reprinted by permission of the Republican National Committee.

The Contract's Core Principles

The Contract with America is rooted in 3 core principles:

ACCOUNTABILITY

The government is too big and spends too much, and Congress and unelected bureaucrats have become so entrenched to be unresponsive to the public they are supposed to serve. The GOP contract restores accountability to government.

RESPONSIBILITY

Bigger government and more federal programs usurp personal responsibility from families and individuals. The GOP contract restores a proper balance between government and personal responsibility.

OPPORTUNITY

The American Dream is out of the reach of too many families because of burdensome government regulations and harsh tax laws. The GOP contract restores the American dream.

The Contract

As Republican Members of the House of Representatives and as citizens seeking to join that body we propose not just to change its policies, but even more important, to restore the bonds of trust between the people and their elected representatives.

That is why, in this era of official evasion and posturing, we offer instead a detailed agenda for national renewal, a written commitment with no fine print.

This year's election offers the chance, after four decades of one-party control, to bring to the House a new majority that will transform the way Congress works. That historic change would be the end of government that is too big, too intrusive, and too easy with the public's money. It can be the beginning of a Congress that respects the values and shares the faith of the American family.

Like Lincoln, our first Republican president, we intend to act "with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right." To restore accountability to Congress. To end its cycle of scandal and disgrace. To make us all proud again of the way free people govern themselves.

On the first day of the 104th Congress, the new Republican majority will immediately pass the following major reforms, aimed at restoring the faith and trust of the American people in their government:

- FIRST, require all laws that apply to the rest of the country also apply equally to the Congress;
- SECOND, select a major, independent auditing firm to conduct a comprehensive audit of Congress for waste, fraud or abuse;
- THIRD, cut the number of House committees, and cut committee staff by one-third;
- FOURTH, limit the terms of all committee chairs;
- FIFTH, ban the casting of proxy votes in committee;
- SIXTH, require committee meetings to be open to the public;
- SEVENTH, require a three-fifths majority vote to pass a tax increase;
- EIGHTH, guarantee an honest accounting of our Federal Budget by implementing zero base-line budgeting.

Thereafter, within the first 100 days of the 104th Congress, we shall bring to the House Floor the following bills, each to be given full and open debate, each to be given a clear and fair vote and each to be immediately available this day for public inspection and scrutiny.

1. THE FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT

A balanced budget/tax limitation amendment and a legislative line-item veto to restore fiscal responsibility to an out-of-control Congress, requiring them to live under the same budget constraints as families and businesses.

2. THE TAKING BACK OUR STREETS ACT

An anti-crime package including stronger truth-in-sentencing, "good faith" exclusionary rule exemptions, effective death penalty provisions, and cuts in social spending from this summer's "crime" bill to fund prison construction and additional law enforcement to keep people secure in their neighborhoods and kids safe in their schools.

3. THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT

Discourage illegitimacy and teen pregnancy by prohibiting welfare to minor mothers and denying increased AFDC for additional children while on welfare, cut spending for welfare programs, and enact a tough two-years-and-out provision with work requirements to promote individual responsibility.

4. THE FAMILY REINFORCEMENT ACT

Child support enforcement, tax incentives for adoption, strengthening rights of parents in their children's education, stronger child pornography laws, and an elderly dependent care tax credit to reinforce the central role of families in American society.

5. THE AMERICAN DREAM RESTORATION ACT

A \$500 per child tax credit, begin repeal of the marriage tax penalty, and creation of American Dream Savings Accounts to provide middle class tax relief.

6. THE NATIONAL SECURITY RESTORATION ACT

No U.S. troops under U.N. command and restoration of the essential parts of our national security funding to strengthen our national defense and maintain our credibility around the world.

7. THE SENIOR CITIZENS FAIRNESS ACT

Raise the Social Security earnings limit which currently forces seniors out of the work force, repeal the 1993 tax hikes

on Social Security benefits and provide tax incentives for private long-term care insurance to let Older Americans keep more of what they have earned over the years.

8. THE JOB CREATION AND WAGE ENHANCEMENT ACT

Small business incentives, capital gains cut and indexation, neutral cost recovery, risk assessment/cost-benefit analysis, strengthening the Regulatory Flexibility Act and unfunded mandate reform to create jobs and raise worker wages.

9. THE COMMON SENSE LEGAL REFORM ACT

"Loser pays" laws, reasonable limits on punitive damages and reform of product liability laws to stem the endless tide of litigation.

10. THE CITIZEN LEGISLATURE ACT

A first-ever vote on term limits to replace career politicians with citizen legislators.

Further, we will instruct the House Budget Committee to report to the floor and we will work to enact additional budget savings, beyond the budget cuts specifically included in the legislation described above, to ensure that the Federal budget deficit will be less than it would have been without the enactment of these bills.

Respecting the judgment of our fellow citizens as we seek their mandate for reform, we hereby pledge our names to this Contract with America.

Questions

1. How does the *Contract with America* demonize government?
 2. What public sentiments does the contract capitalize on? How did those sentiments arise?
 3. What are the advantages and dangers of using this kind of election strategy?
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31-4 Speech at Mason Temple (1993)

William Jefferson Clinton

President Clinton was a centrist and his philosophy, which he sometimes expressed in terms of the "new covenant," consisted of more empowerment and less entitlement. He asked individuals, in effect, to meet the government halfway. He tried to apply this idea to many things, including minority rights. On November 13, 1993, Clinton gave a speech to a black church in Memphis, Tennessee, in which he laid out his ideas in reference to the historic civil rights struggle.

Source: President William Jefferson Clinton, Speech at Mason Temple, Memphis, TN, November 13, 1993.
