

Clinton to address the nation

In his State of the Union address, Clinton will speak about education and health care

By Terence Hunt
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Clinton rehearsed a State of the Union address brimming with ideas on education, health care and other initiatives likely to get a chilly reception from a Congress bitterly divided by the impeachment ordeal.

As Clinton's lawyers reviewed the legal defense they will begin presenting on his behalf Tuesday, Education Secretary Richard Riley previewed one of the president's top education priorities: to hold states and school districts accountable for the achievements of students and teachers.

States that fail to end social promotions and set standards could lose some federal education aid. "Most of our schools are doing very well and are involved in this standards movement in a very exciting way," Riley said. "Yet there are places out there that things aren't happening."

In another preview Monday, the administration said Clinton would propose a tax credit of up to \$500 per child, age 1 or younger, to offset costs for parents who choose to stay home to care for their kids. The proposal is part of a larger child care package that seeks \$18 billion over five years to aid working poor and middle-class families.

The administration also floated a proposal for \$1 billion over five years to improve health care for many of the nation's 32 million uninsured adults. The money would be used to encourage community clinics and hospitals to work together to keep track of patients and make sure they get

needed treatment.

Before a prime-time television audience, Clinton will deliver his State of the Union address at 9 p.m. EST Tuesday in the House chamber.

It was in that same chamber one month ago Tuesday that the House voted for only the second time in history to impeach the president. The only other time was when Andrew Johnson was impeached in 1868 and went on to survive by one vote in a Senate impeachment trial.

To build support, the White House Office of Public Liaison sent out faxes urging supporters to hold State of the Union watch parties at club and union halls — and to tell news outlets about the gatherings.

A new poll from the Pew Research Center said the Senate trial has not changed Americans' minds about turning Clinton out of office, and that two-thirds of the public wants him to stay. The survey indicated 53 percent of Americans are satisfied with the way things are going in the country, and said 63 percent of the people approve of his performance in office.

Tuesday night, Clinton's House accusers and Senate jurors will listen as the president speaks for an hour or more about his agenda for the country. Chief Justice William Rehnquist, after presiding over Clinton's Senate trial, will be among the spectators in the House. The president, according to aides, will not mention the impeachment drama.

House Speaker Dennis Hastert sent House members a "Dear Colleague" letter telling them to be on good behavior despite "the discomfort" surrounding the Senate trial. "Out of respect for the office of the president and for the state of our union," Hastert wrote, "we will listen to the president's remarks soberly and with the digni-

ty that befits the United States Congress."

White House press secretary Joe Lockhart said Clinton would be addressing the American people as much as the members of the House and Senate. Lockhart said the president "is always comfortable when he's dealing with issues, dealing with issues that impact real people's lives and dealing with how the government can help provide the tools that people need at home and at work."

Last year, Clinton challenged Congress to reserve all of the burgeoning budget surplus to "save Social Security first." This year, he is expected to urge Congress to join the administration in a bipartisan campaign to get the job done.

For all the fanfare and detail about Clinton's proposals, White House officials acknowledge that the Republican-led Congress will have its own ideas and won't be eager to rubber-stamp the ideas of a president that the GOP wants to oust from office. But both sides recognize that ideas for fixing Social Security and improving schools are popular.

Clinton will renew calls to increase the minimum wage, build new schools, impose a national settlement on the tobacco industry, reform the campaign finance system, increase Pentagon spending by \$110 billion over six years and allow Americans as young as 55 years old buy into the Medicare program.

On foreign policy, he will emphasize the importance of fighting terrorism and call on the Senate again to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. He will call for expanding cooperation and assistance to the former Soviet Union to strengthen the safety and security of nuclear stockpiles, proposing incentives for Russian weapons experts to study nonmilitary research.

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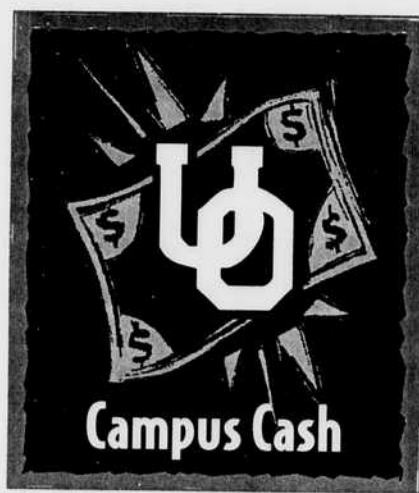
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