*REAGAN ADDRESS:*

*Focus:*

*(1) examples of extending the authority of the executive branch*

*(2)examples of trying to limit the size of the national government.*

*Also, how does Reagan address federalism? (3) Find examples of where states have more authority (4) Finally, how does he interpret extending democracy?*

*His seventh and final annual message, President Ronald Reagan delivered this speech to the U.S. Congress and the American people in a televised address on January 25, 1988.*

*Thank you. Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, and distinguished members of the House and Senate, when we first met here seven years ago many of us for the first time it was with the hope or beginning something new for America. We meet here tonight in this historic Chamber to continue that work. If anyone expects just a proud recitation of the accomplishments of my administration, I say let's leave that to history: we're not finished yet. So my message to you tonight is, put on your work shoes we're still on the job.*

We have done this before. And as we have worked together to bring down spending, tax rates, and inflation, employment has climbed to record heights; America has created more jobs and better, higher-paying jobs; family income has risen for four straight years, and America's poor climbed out of poverty at the fastest rate in more than 10 years. Our record is not just the longest peacetime expansion in history, but an economic and social revolution of hope, based on work, incentives, growth and opportunity; a revolution of compassion that led to private sector initiatives and a 77 percent increase in charitable giving; a revolution that at a critical moment in world history reclaimed and restored the American dream.

Toward this end, we have four basic objectives tonight. First, steps we can take this year to keep our economy strong and growing, to give our children a future of low inflation and full employment. Second, let's check our progress in attacking social problems where important gains have been made but which still need critical attention. I mean schools that work, economic independence for the poor, restoring respect for family life and family values. Our third objective tonight is global continuing the exciting economic and democratic revolutions we've seen around the world. Fourth and finally, our nation has remained at peace for nearly a decade and a half, as we move toward our goals of world prosperity and world freedom. We must protect that peace and deter war by making sure the next President inherits what you and I have a moral obligation to give that President to a national security that is unassailable (unable to be attacked) and a national defense that takes full advantage of new technology, and is fully funded.

And that's why our focus is the values, the principles, and ideas that made America great. Let's be clear on this point to we’re for limited government because we understand, as the Founding Fathers did, that it is the best way of ensuring personal liberty and empowering the individual so that every American of every race and region shares fully in the flowering of American prosperity and freedom.

And let's begin by discussing how to maintain economic growth by controlling and eventually eliminating the problem of federal deficits. We have had a balanced budget only eight times in the last 57 years. For the first time in 14 years, the federal government spent less in real terms last year than the year before. We took $73 billion off last year's deficit compared to the year before. The deficit itself has moved from 6.3 percent of the Gross National Product to only 3.4 percent. And perhaps the most important sign of progress has been the change in our view of deficits.

Our recent budget agreement, designed to reduce federal deficits by $76 billion over the next two years, builds on this consensus. But this agreement must be adhered to without slipping into the errors of the past to more broken promises and more unchecked spending. As I indicated in my first State of the Union, what ails us can be simply put: The federal government is too big and it spends too much money. I can assure you, the bipartisan leadership of Congress, of my help in fighting off any attempt to bust our budget agreement. And this includes the swift and certain use of the veto power.

I'm also certain you join me in saying: Let's help ensure our future of prosperity by giving the President a tool that although I will not get to use it, it is one I know future Presidents of either party must have. Give the President the same authority that 43 governors use in their states, the right to reach into massive appropriation bills, pare away the waste, and enforce budget discipline. Let's approve the line-item veto (ability to cross out one part of a bill and keep the rest).

And let's take a partial step in this direction. Most of you in this Chamber didn't know what was in this catch-all bill and report. Over the past few weeks, we've all learned what was tucked away behind a little comma here and there. For example, there's millions for items such as cranberry research, blueberry research, the study of crawfish, and the commercialization of wild flowers. And that's not to mention the $5 million (White House correction: $.5 million) or so that people from developing nations could come here to watch Congress at work. I won't even touch that. So tonight, I offer you this challenge. In 30 days, I will send back to you those items as rescissions, which if I had the authority to line them out, I would do so.

There is another vital reform. Yes, Gramm-Rudman-Hollings has been profoundly helpful, but let us take its goal of a balanced budget and make it permanent. Let us do now what so many states do to hold down spending and what 32 state legislatures have asked us to do; let us heed the wishes of an overwhelming plurality of Americans and pass a constitutional amendment that mandates a balanced budget and forces the federal government to live within its means.

Reform of the budget process including the line-item veto and balanced budget amendment will, together with real restraint on government spending, prevent the federal budget from ever again ravaging the family budget.

And speaking of the family, let's turn to a matter on the mind of every American parent tonight to education. We all know the sorry story of the 60s and 70s soaring spending, plummeting test scores and that hopeful trend of the 80s, when we replaced an obsession with dollars with a commitment to quality, and test scores started back up. There's a lesson here that we all should write on the blackboard 100 times in a child's education, money can never take the place of basics like discipline, hard work, and, yes, homework.

How can we help? Well, we can talk about and push for these reforms. But the most important thing we can do is to reaffirm that control of our schools belongs to the states, local communities and, most of all, to the parents and teachers.

My friends, some years ago, the federal government declared war on poverty, and poverty won. Today, the federal government has 59 major welfare programs and spends more than $100 billion a year on them. What has all this money done?

Well, too often it has only made poverty harder to escape. Federal welfare programs have created a massive social problem. With the best of intentions, government created a poverty trap that wreaks havoc on the very support system the poor need most to lift themselves out of poverty of the family. Dependency has become the one enduring heirloom, passed from one generation to the next, of too many fragmented families.

It is time this may be the most radical thing I've said in seven years in this office it's time for Washington to show a little humility. There are a thousand sparks of genius in 50 states and a thousand communities around the nation. It is time to nurture them and see which ones can catch fire and become guiding lights.

States have begun to show us the way. They have demonstrated that successful welfare programs can be built around more effective child support enforcement practices and innovative programs requiring welfare recipients to work or prepare for work.

Let us give the states even more flexibility and encourage more reforms.

Let's start making our welfare system the first rung on America's ladder of opportunity to boost up from dependency; not a graveyard, but a birthplace of hope.

And let me add here: so many of our greatest statesmen have reminded us that spiritual values alone are essential to our nation's health and vigor. The Congress opens its proceedings each day, as does the Supreme Court, with an acknowledgment of the Supreme Being yet we are denied the right to set aside in our schools a moment each day for those who wish to pray. I believe Congress should pass our school prayer amendment.

One of the greatest contributions the United States can make to the world is to promote freedom as the key to economic growth. A creative, competitive America is the answer to a changing world, not trade wars that would close doors, create greater barriers, and destroy millions of jobs. We should always remember: protectionism is destructionism. America's jobs, America's growth, America's future depend on trade that is free, open, and fair.

*It means, too, that the young Americans I spoke of seven years ago, as well as those who might be coming along the Virginia or Maryland shores this night and seeing for the first time the lights of this capital city, the lights that cast their glow on our great halls of government and the monuments to the memory of our great men it means those young Americans will find a city of hope in a land that is free.*

*We can be proud that for them and for us as those lights along the Potomac are still seen this night signaling, as they have for nearly two centuries and as we pray God they always will, that another generation of Americans has protected and passed on lovingly this place called America, this shining city on a hill, this government of, by, and for the people.*

Thank you and God bless you.

"Ronald Reagan: State of the Union message (1988)." *American History*. ABC-CLIO, 2014. Web. 7 Nov. 2014.