

Clinton denounces attempt to cut student loans

□ The president vowed to protect federally backed student loans yesterday while speaking at an Illinois university.

CARBONDALE, Ill. (AP) — President Clinton yesterday accused the banking industry of jeopardizing his college loan program and urged Congress to "stand up to the special interests who want their money back."

In a back-to-school attack on Republican budget plans, Clinton said bankers are the only people hurt by his 1993 program that allows students to secure loans directly from the federal government.

"Ever since then it's been under assault by the bankers who made the money under the old loans," Clinton told a roundtable of hand-picked students who praised the program.

"But students are better off, the administrators are better off, the federal treasury is better off and the country is better off because now we're going to have more people going to school," Clinton said.

Under the program, student loans traditionally obtained through banks are secured directly from the government. The White House says the pro-

gram saved taxpayers \$6.8 billion by reducing bank fees and lowered interest rates for students. The program also allows students to repay the loans based on their after-school income.

The students gave Clinton a T-shirt with a smiling face. "Why are we smiling?" it read. "Direct loans."

Later, addressing thousands of students on the Southern Illinois University campus, Clinton said: "We do not have to cut education to balance the budget."

"As we go back to school and the Congress goes back to work, the question is ... will your country meet the challenges of the 21st century or will we cut off our nose to spite our face by cutting back on educational aid at a time when we need to spend more on it?"

Clinton's speech opened a second week of Republican criticism built around school events. He was in California last Tuesday, the first day of school for most of the country, accusing the GOP of gutting school funding.

Stepping up the blitz, 47 agency heads under orders to knock GOP budget plans were traveling the country this week for 70 school-related events.

Clinton's remarks today were fed by satellite to audiences in California, Louisiana and Minnesota. He planned to speak to school superintendents by satellite on Tuesday.

The campaign is aimed at pressuring a Senate committee scheduled to vote Wednesday on a House-passed bill that Clinton says would dramatically scale back his direct-loan program for college students and trim education funding by \$36 billion over seven years.

Clinton's budget would add \$40 billion to education budgets.

Republicans accused Clinton of fighting for big government and inefficient education programs when the federal budget needs paring.

"While the Congress is trying to decrease the size of government, Bill Clinton is still trying to cling to the days when big government was the answer to everything," Rep. Jerry Weller, R-Ill., said.

Weller was in Carbondale to meet with student William Karrow, who said he was drafted from a list of youths invited to talk to Clinton about the student loan program. Karrow lost his spot when the White House learned he opposed Clinton's policies.

The White House said it interviewed several students, looking for stories that highlighted Clinton's concerns. Karrow "didn't cut the mustard," was never invited, press secretary Mike McCurry said.

"This kid had a story that was more representative of the views of the Republican majority," he said.

More than 1,400 schools with 1.35 million students took advantage of the program last year, representing about 40 percent of all school loans.

Clinton wants to expand it to all schools, but publicans would cap participation at 40 percent of all schools.

Clinton said he ordered the two-week campaign to persuade Americans to "ask their Congress to stand up to the special interests who want their money back, and keep this program which is working for you."



"... will your country meet the challenges of the 21st century or will we cut off our nose to spite our face by cutting back on educational aid at a time when we need to spend more on it?"

— President Bill Clinton

Connick: Star-filled weekend leaves no openings

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scheduled performance.

"There were just too many problems with the proposed date, which we needed to evaluate," Conway said.

"The Clay Walker concert is on Friday, the Film Society is presenting Species that weekend, A&M is playing [the University of] Houston at home and OPAS is bringing Jesus Christ Superstar for two shows."

Aside from these programming conflicts, there was a lack of A&M stagehands to work the Connick show, Conway said.

"If Connick were to play, then we would have to independently contract hands for the show, which would add to the shows expenses," he said.

At the MSC Council Executive meeting, members of OPAS voiced their concern that if Connick performed Oct. 29, it would take away from the Jesus Christ Superstar audience.

Karen Allen, OPAS chair, said the organization is depending on a good turnout for Jesus Christ Superstar to pay for more expensive shows.

"Harry Connick, Jr. has a very strong pull and the audience that would attend his

performance would have overlapped with Jesus Christ Superstar's audience," Allen said. "We rely on shows such as Jesus Christ Superstar to cover performances like Central Ballet China, which are so expensive to bring."

Brian Quarks, Town Hall chair, said Connick's performance was important to the organization because Connick is so well-known.

"This performance would have been the highest profile, non-country show that Town Hall would have been associated with since I've been here," Quarks said.

Conway said that in order to evaluate both sides fairly, an informal survey of 300 students was taken.

"Several committee members presented students with surveys informing them of what programs would be available to attend that weekend and then asking them how many and which of the programs would they attend, if any," he said.

"We found that either they were going to attend Clay Walker or Harry Connick, Jr. or Jesus Christ Superstar, but usually not combinations of the programs."

Conway said it was evident from the survey that students could not afford to attend all the shows and that Connick's performance would have affected the turnout for Jesus Christ Superstar.

"I believe we made the right decision for this particular situation," he said.

Quarks said that although he was upset that Connick will not be performing, the MSC Council cooperated every step of the way.



"There were just too many problems with the proposed date."

— Patrick Conway
MSC Council president

"Obviously we're very disappointed that Connick will not be performing, but I feel that the MSC looked at all issues involved and gave us the opportunity to express our side," he said.

"I feel good about the decision-making process. Everyone did what was best for the MSC and for Texas A&M."

University of Houston to get much-needed campus facelift

□ Increased state appropriations pay for \$72 million renovation of school's deteriorating buildings.

HOUSTON (AP) — New University of Houston President Glenn Goerke, standing in front of a long-broken escalator, announced Monday a five-year \$72 million project to fix nearly every academic building on campus.

"It's been a long time coming," Goerke, who took over as president six weeks ago, said. "You look at a campus this age — with buildings dating back to the '60s and '70s — it would be easy to spend \$100 million. What we've identified are the most critical needs."

School officials listed 1,690 individual projects. That number makes the renovation one of the most ambitious capital renewal plans ever undertaken by a university in Texas or anywhere else, Goerke said.

Maintenance and repairs had been deferred because the school didn't have the money. The university now can afford the expenditures because of increased legislative appropriations in the state's Higher Education Assistance Fund.

An audit of 50 buildings on the main campus showed while most are in fair condition, the heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems are not working properly and most of the roofs of the buildings leak.

"We had consultants come in here and take a look at the entire campus and not only walk the space but crawl in the space and crawl under the space," he said.

And although many have been renovated over the years, the consultants determined those renovations hindered the operation of the original electrical and mechanical systems, which were not designed for today's technology and building codes.

In addition, most of the structures are more than 20 years old and equipment is deteriorating rapidly.

None of the buildings comply with guidelines under the Americans With Disabilities Act and the school estimated compliance with that law alone would amount to more than \$4.7 million.

"The disrepair has long been a volatile issue with us," Dom Lewinsohn, a senior hotel and restaurant management student and vice president of the UH Student Association, said. "This is really exciting news. Let's hope I won't be a student when the renovations are finished in five years."

University officials said they have hired Houston-based 3D/International, an architectural engineering and construction management firm, to manage the entire project rather than handling each repair job individually.

"We estimate that right off the top we'll see a 3 to 5 percent savings because we won't have to hire different consultants for each project," Goerke said.

"Part of our planning involves making sure the university's mission is not compromised," Goerke said, adding that transitional classrooms and lab space will have to be found.

"All in all, the effect is to make this a better place to teach and learn. Teaching and learning does not go on well when it rains and water is up to your ankles. Teaching and learning does not go on well when the air conditioning does not work and it's 143 degrees inside a classroom."

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Magic Johnson to start profitable speaking tour

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Magic Johnson will get \$400,000 from a Philippine company for an AIDS prevention speaking tour.

The former basketball star will preach the message that "anybody could get HIV," said Anthony Roda, a spokesman for the government's health department.

Johnson will visit Manila and Cebu City Oct. 26-28, Roda said Monday.



Johnson

Hootie awaits award from South Carolina governor

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina's "Hootie who?" governor hasn't decided whether Hootie & the Blowfish should receive the state's top honor.

A legislator is pushing Gov. David Beasley to give the homegrown rock band Order of the Palmetto awards in time for their concert Wednesday in Columbia. Beasley said he probably

MacDowell claims extra weight not a heavy issue

NEW YORK (AP) — Wearing some excess weight, not silky lingerie, made Andie MacDowell feel sexy — really sexy — after each of her three pregnancies.

Playing a pregnant mother and expecting her third child while filming the movie *Unstrung Heroes*, MacDowell said she wished she could have kept her extra 20 pounds on longer.

"When I was round, after having each of my babies, I thought I looked really beautiful and felt very sexy. Extremely sexy," the 37-year-old actress told Redbook magazine.

The 5-8 MacDowell thought she had a "softness" like "that seen in old paintings" and felt "sexy in bed making love with my husband."



MacDowell

Former 'Saved by the Bell' star turns down Playboy

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The movie *Showgirls* is all the exposure Elizabeth Berkley needs.

The actress, who plays a stripper in the NC-17 movie, said she turned down an offer to pose nude for Playboy.

"I felt with the movie out, this wasn't the right time because you can pay \$7.50 and see enough of me in the movie," Berkley told the syndicated TV show "Extra" in an interview Tuesday.

That doesn't mean she'll never pose for Playboy. "I never say never," she said.

Showgirls, due out Sept. 22, is the first movie since "Henry & June" to get the NC-17 rating.

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