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euthanasia, or mercy killing through Medicaid, Medicare, military and Federal employee health plans, the veterans health care system, and other Federally funded programs.

Section 5(a)(3) of the Act also assures that taxpayer funds will not be used to subsidize legal assistance or other forms of advocacy in support of legal protection for assisted suicide, euthanasia, or mercy killing. The restrictions on the use of funds contained in this section, properly construed, will allow the Federal Government to speak with a clear voice in opposing these practices. The Department of Justice has advised, however, that a broad construction of this section would raise serious First Amendment concerns. I am therefore instructing the Federal agencies that they should construe section 5(a)(3) only to prohibit Federal funding for activities and services that provide legal assistance for the purpose of advocating a right to assisted suicide, or that have as their purpose the advocacy of assisted suicide, and not to restrict Federal funding for other activities, such as those that provide forums for the free exchange of ideas. In addition, I emphasize that section 5(a)(3) imposes no restriction on the use of nonfederal funds.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
April 30, 1997.

NOTE: H.R. 1003, approved April 30, was assigned Public Law No. 105–12.

Memorandum on Excused Absence for Employees Affected by the Flooding of the Red River and Its Aftermath

April 30, 1997

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Excused Absence for Employees Affected by the Flooding of the Red River and its Aftermath

I am deeply concerned about the devastating losses caused by the flooding of the Red River and the impact on the well-being and livelihood of our fellow Americans who have been affected by this disaster. Elements of the Federal Government have been mobilized to respond to this disaster.

As part of this effort, I request the heads of executive departments and agencies, who have Federal civilian employees in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota in areas designated as disaster areas because of the flooding of the Red River and its aftermath, to use their discretion to excuse from duty, without charge to leave or loss of pay, any such employee who is faced with a personal emergency because of this flood and who can be spared from his or her usual responsibilities. This policy should also be applied to any employee who is needed for emergency law enforcement, relief, or clean-up efforts authorized by Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks Commemorating the Centennial of the Thomas Jefferson Building at the Library of Congress

April 30, 1997

I ask you tonight to listen to these words as if you had never heard them before and try to imagine what it was like when they broke across the landscape of America and the world, arguably the most important words ever written by an American because out of them all the rest flowed:

"When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them