

workplace, and to meet the quiet crisis of crumbling and crowded school buildings across America. We have more children in our schools than at any time in our history, with serious overcrowding problems and serious building deterioration problems, which I believe we should help to address.

Let me say, finally, that this bill continues our efforts to strengthen families on many other fronts. It expands educational opportunity for recent immigrants, children with disabilities, children growing up in our poorest neighborhoods. It significantly increases funding for biomedical research, from cancer to Parkinson's disease—and we're particularly glad to have Mrs. Udall with us today—to the astonishing human genome project. And I would like to thank Congressman Porter and Congressman Obey and Congressman Spratt for the work that they have done on this particular thing. And I would like to especially thank Congressman Upton for the work that he's done on the Parkinson's issue. This is a remarkable, remarkable bill with an astonishing bipartisan commitment to keep our country on the front ranks of medical research.

Finally, it will help to make new, very powerful AIDS therapies more available to needy patients. Along with the FDA reform legislation this Congress has passed that we will be signing in the next several days, moving promising medical therapies to market more quickly in a more efficient way and then making them more available to the people that need them can change the lives and improve the quality as well as

the length of lives for many, many tens of thousands of our fellow Americans.

And believe it or not, with all these issues on the education checklist and all the things I just mentioned in health care, these are just some of the important provisions in this bill that honor our duty to prepare our people for the future. As much as any bill I have signed, as much as any bill the Congress has passed in recent years, this bill genuinely does fulfill our strategy of opportunity for all, responsibility from all, a community of all Americans. I am very proud to sign it into law.

And again, let me thank every single person in this room who had anything to do with its enactment, but especially, let me thank the Members of Congress who are here for working together in good spirit and honest and principled compromise to hammer out this truly remarkable bill.

Thank you very much.

Now I'd like to ask the Members of Congress and the people from the executive departments and our speakers to join me up here while we sign the legislation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:29 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to fifth grade student Philip Israel, who introduced the President, and his mother, Tina; Kikuyu Shaw, a junior at Howard University; and Norma Udall, wife of former Representative Morris K. Udall. H.R. 2264, approved November 13, was assigned Public Law No. 105-78.

Statement on Signing the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998 *November 13, 1997*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2264, the "Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998."

This Act provides over \$80 billion in discretionary budget authority to fund important education, training, and health programs. I am pleased that H.R. 2264 funds a number of my highest domestic priorities at or above my request.

The Act provides \$29.6 billion for the Department of Education, which will allow us to prepare tomorrow's leaders for the challenges of the future. I am very pleased to see such strong support for Education programs by the Congress, support I hope will only grow stronger in the coming years. First, I am pleased that the Congress has voted to fund the development of voluntary national tests linked to high academic standards in reading and math. I am also

very pleased that the Act increases the maximum Pell grant award to my request of \$3,000. This increase, in conjunction with a \$1.4 billion increase in funding, will ease the burden of increasing college costs for low- and middle-income families. Finally, I am very pleased that the Act nearly doubles the Federal investment in educational technology and funds 500 new Charter Schools. I am concerned, however, about the inadequate funding provided for my America Reads Challenge literacy initiative in FY 1998. I am committed to working with the Congress to enact authorizing legislation for a child literacy initiative that will use the \$210 million contingently provided in the bill for FY 1999.

The Act provides \$33.8 billion for the Department of Health and Human Services, providing large increases to a variety of important public health programs. Funding for biomedical research through the National Institutes of Health is increased dramatically. Support for AIDS programs, including programs to assist in the acquisition and provision of break-through AIDS treatments, is stronger than ever. Funding provided in the Act for Head Start moves us closer to achieving my goal of placing 1,000,000 chil-

dren in Head Start by the year 2002. Head Start provides early childhood development and other social services to children, and this funding level will allow the program to add at least 36,000 new slots.

The Department of Labor receives \$10.7 billion for FY 1998. This will provide strong support for important programs such as assistance to dislocated workers, Summer Jobs, and Job Corps. My Administration will work with the Congress to ensure enactment of training reform legislation by July 1, 1998, to use the \$250 million provided as an advance appropriation in FY 1999 for targeted projects to improve employment among out-of-school youth in high poverty areas. The Act also funds critical worker protection programs, championing the rights of the men and women who keep America working.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 13, 1997.

NOTE: H.R. 2264, approved November 13, was assigned Public Law No. 105-78.

Statement on Congressional Action on Adoption Legislation November 13, 1997

I am pleased that the Senate and the House of Representatives have passed historic, bipartisan legislation to promote adoption and improve our Nation's child welfare system, giving our Nation's most vulnerable children what every child deserves—a safe and permanent home. I very much look forward to signing the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 into law.

This legislation makes clear that children's health and safety are the paramount concerns of the public child welfare system. I am particularly pleased that the bill incorporates my administration's recommendations to provide States with financial incentives to increase the number of children who are adopted and to make other changes in Federal law that will make adoption easier and move children more rapidly out of foster care and into permanent homes. The legislation also strengthens support

to States for services that help families stay together when that is possible and promote adoption when it is not. Most important, this legislation will help us meet the goal of doubling, by the year 2002, the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year.

I want to thank the many Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives who worked so hard on this bipartisan achievement, but I particularly want to thank the Congressional leadership and the sponsors of this legislation, Senators Chafee and Rockefeller and Representatives Camp and Kennelly, for their commitment. And I would like to add a special work of thanks to the First Lady for her tenacity and dedication to this important issue.

I can think of no better way to celebrate National Adoption Month than to sign this legislation into law.