

June 9 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

I am troubled by the many hundreds of special interest highway projects funded in this Act. I would have preferred a “cleaner” bill, with funds provided to States for projects of their choosing. Project selection decisions should be a State responsibility.

I would also have preferred a stronger program to support implementation of a key Federal responsibility—control of our Nation’s borders. My Administration will work with the Congress to secure additional funds, within existing highway funding totals, to ensure that the Government has the technology and infrastructure in place to expedite cross-border traffic while continuing our vital efforts to stop contraband, including illegal drugs, from entering our country.

I am pleased that H.R. 2400 adopts the low student loan interest rate that the Vice President proposed in February on behalf of our Administration. I have serious concerns, however, about the subsidies that the Act would force taxpayers to pay to lenders on top of the payments made by borrowers. It is critical that we move toward a system that relies on market pressures, not political pressures, in setting subsidies for lend-

ers and intermediaries. My Administration is committed to working with the Congress on a long-term, mutually acceptable solution that moves toward a market-based mechanism for determining lender returns.

Regrettably and unintentionally, H.R. 2400 contains a number of technical errors related to veterans benefits and important highway safety programs. I urge the Congress to complete action on and send me promptly the House-passed technical corrections bill, H.R. 3978, which addresses these concerns.

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century represents a significant achievement in our efforts to meet our transportation needs in the next century. I commend the Congress for its diligent, bipartisan efforts to resolve differences and to pass this important legislation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 9, 1998.

NOTE: H.R. 2400, approved June 9, was assigned Public Law No. 105–178.

Statement on Proposed Child Care Legislation

June 9, 1998

The balanced budget I submitted to Congress includes an ambitious initiative to make child care better, safer, and more affordable. America’s working families and our Nation’s children deserve our attention and action on this critical issue. Today House Democrats are unveiling an important proposal—sponsored by over 100 Representatives—to address the child care needs of working families. Like my child care initiative, this new package significantly increases child care subsidies for poor children, provides greater tax relief to help low- and middle-income families pay for child care, creates a tax credit for businesses that provide child care to their em-

ployees, increases after-school opportunities for children, promotes early learning, and improves child care quality.

I believe that by continuing to work together and by taking the best proposals from both sides of the aisle, we can achieve legislation that helps Americans fulfill their responsibilities as workers, and even more importantly, their responsibilities as parents. I welcome this important contribution from House Democrats, and I urge all Members of Congress to come together this year to improve child care for our Nation’s working families.