

to bring these budget negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Jiang Zemin of China.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval Appropriations Legislation for the District of Columbia and Labor, Health, and Education Programs

November 3, 1999

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 3064, the FY 2000 District of Columbia and Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

I am vetoing H.R. 3064 because the bill, including the offsets section, is deeply flawed. It includes a misguided 0.97 percent across-the-board reduction that will hurt everything from national defense to education and environmental programs. The legislation also contains crippling cuts in key education, labor, and health priorities and undermines our capacity to manage these programs effectively. The enrolled bill delays the availability of \$10.9 billion for the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and other important health and social services programs, resulting in delays in important medical research and health services to low-income Americans. The bill is clearly unacceptable. I have submitted a budget that would fund these priorities without spending the Social Security surplus, and I am committed to working with the Congress to identify acceptable offsets for additional spending for programs that are important to all Americans.

The bill also fails to fulfill the bipartisan commitment to raise student achievement by authorizing and financing class size reduction. It does not guarantee any continued funding for the 29,000 teachers hired with FY 1999 funds, or the additional 8,000 teachers to be hired under my FY 2000 proposal. Moreover, the bill language turns the program into a virtual block grant that could be spent on vouchers and other unspecified activities. In addition, the bill fails to fund my proposed investments in teacher quality by not funding Troops to Teachers (\$18 million) and by cutting \$35 million from my request for Teacher Quality Enhancement

Grants. These programs would bring more highly qualified teachers into the schools, especially in high-poverty, high-need school districts.

The bill cuts \$189 million from my request for Title I Education for the Disadvantaged, resulting in 300,000 fewer children in low-income communities receiving needed services. The bill also fails to improve accountability or help States turn around the lowest-performing schools because it does not include my proposal to set aside 2.5 percent for these purposes. Additionally, the bill provides only \$300 million for 21st Century Community Learning Centers, only half my \$600 million request. At this level, the conference report would deny after-school services to more than 400,000 students.

The bill provides only \$180 million for GEAR UP, \$60 million below my request, to help disadvantaged students prepare for college beginning in the seventh grade. This level would serve nearly 131,000 fewer low-income students. In addition, the bill does not adequately fund my Hispanic Education Agenda. It provides no funds for the Adult Education English as a Second Language/Civics Initiative to help limited English proficient adults learn English and gain life skills necessary for successful citizenship and civil participation. The bill underfunds programs designed to improve educational outcomes for Hispanic and other minority students, including Bilingual Education, the High School Equivalency Program (HEP), the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), and the Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities program.

The bill underfunds Education Technology programs, including distance learning and community technology centers. In particular, the bill provides only \$10 million to community based

technology centers, \$55 million below my request. My request would provide access to technology in 300 additional low-income communities. The bill provides \$75 million for education research, \$34 million less than my request, and includes no funding for the Department of Education's share of large-scale joint research with the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health on early learning in reading and mathematics, teacher preparation, and technology applications.

The bill does not fund the \$53 million I requested to provide job finding assistance to 241,000 unemployment insurance claimants. This means that these claimants will remain unemployed longer, costing more in benefit payments. The bill also provides only \$140 million of my \$199 million request to expand services to job seekers at One-Stop centers as recently authorized in the bipartisan Workforce Investment Act. The bill funds \$120 million of the \$149 million requested for efforts to improve access to One-Stops as well as continued support for electronic labor exchange and labor market information. It funds only \$20 million of the \$50 million requested for work incentive grants to help integrate employment services for persons with disabilities into the mainstream One-Stop system.

The bill also does not provide funding for Right Track Partnerships (RTP). I requested \$75 million for this new competitive grant program. Designed to help address youth violence, RTP would become part of the multi-agency Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative, expanding it to include a focus on out-of-school youth.

The bill provides \$33 million less than my request for labor law enforcement agencies, denying or reducing initiatives to ensure workplace safety, address domestic child labor abuses, encourage equal pay, implement new health law, and promote family leave. In particular, the bill provides an inadequate level of funding for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, cutting it by \$18 million, or 5 percent below my request.

The bill also fails to provide adequate funding for the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). The bill funds ILAB at \$50 million, \$26 million below my request. The bill would prevent ILAB from carrying out my proposal to work through the International Labor Organization to help developing countries establish

core labor standards, an essential step towards leveling the playing field for American workers.

The bill's funding level for the Bureau of Labor Statistics is \$11 million less than my request. The enrolled bill denies three important increases that would: (1) improve the Producer Price Index, which measures wholesale prices; (2) improve measures of labor productivity in the service sector; and, (3) improve the Employment Cost Index, used to help set wage levels and guide anti-inflation policy. It also denies funding for a study of racial discrimination in labor markets.

The bill denies my request for \$10 million to fund AgNet, even though the Senate included report language that supports AgNet in concept. AgNet, an Internet-based labor exchange, would facilitate the recruitment of agricultural workers by growers and the movement of agricultural workers to areas with employment needs.

The bill would cut the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) by \$209 million below FY 1999 and \$680 million below my request. The SSBG serves some of the most vulnerable families, providing child protection and child welfare services for millions of children. In addition, the failure to provide the Senate's level of \$2 billion in advance appropriations for the Child Care and Development Block Grant would mean 220,000 fewer children receiving child care assistance in FY 2001. The bill also fails to fund my National Family Caregiver Support program, which would provide urgently needed assistance to 250,000 families caring for older relatives.

By funding the Title X Family Planning program at last year's level, family planning clinics would be unable to extend comprehensive reproductive health care services to an additional 500,000 clients who are neither Medicaid-eligible nor insured. The bill also fails to fund the Health Care Access for the Uninsured Initiative, which would enable the development of integrated systems of care and address service gaps within these systems.

The bill fails to fully fund several of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) critical public health programs, including:

- *childhood immunizations* (- \$44 million), so that approximately 300,000 children may not receive the full complement of recommended childhood vaccinations;

- *infectious diseases* (- \$36 million), which will impair CDC's ability to investigate outbreaks of diseases such as the West Nile virus in New York;
- *domestic HIV prevention* (- \$4 million);
- *race and health demonstrations* (- \$5 million), which will impair better understanding of how to reduce racial disparities in health; and,
- *health statistics* (- \$10 million) for key data collection activities such as the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and health information on racial and ethnic population groups.

The Congress has failed to fund any of the \$59 million increase I requested for the Mental Health Block Grant, which would diminish States' capacity to serve the mentally ill.

In addition, the Congress has underfunded my request for the Substance Abuse Block Grant by \$30 million, and has underfunded other substance abuse treatment grants by a total of \$45 million. These reductions would widen the treatment gap in FY 2000 and jeopardize the Federal Government's ability to meet the National Drug Control Strategy performance target to reduce the drug treatment gap by 50 percent by FY 2007.

The bill provides only half of the \$40 million requested for graduate education at Children's Hospitals, which play an essential role in education the Nation's physicians, training 25 percent of pediatricians and over half of many pediatric subspecialists.

The bill underfunds the Congressional Black Caucus' AIDS Initiative in the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund by \$15 million, thereby reducing current efforts to prevent the spread of HIV. By not fully funding this program, the scope of HIV/AIDS prevention, education, and outreach activities available to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS in minority communities will be more limited.

The bill fails to fund Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) program management adequately. These reductions would severely impede HCFA's ability to ensure the quality of nursing home care through the Nursing Home Initiative. The bill does not adequately fund the request for Medicare+Choice user fees. This decrease would force HCFA to scale back the National Medicare Education Campaign. The Congress has not passed the proposed user fees

totaling \$194.5 million that could free up resources under the discretionary caps for education and other priorities.

The bill includes a provision that would prevent funds from being used to administer the Medicare+Choice Competitive Pricing Demonstration Project in Kansas and Arizona. These demonstrations which are supported by MEDPAC and other independent health policy experts, were passed by the Congress as part of the Balanced Budget Act in order to provide valuable information regarding the use of competitive pricing methodologies in Medicare. The information that we could learn from these demonstrations is particularly relevant as we consider the important task of reforming Medicare.

The bill contains a highly objectionable provision that would delay the implementation of HHS' final Organ Procurement and Transplantation rule for 90 days. This rule, which was strongly validated by an Institute of Medicine report, provides a more equitable system of treatment for over 63,000 Americans waiting for an organ transplant; its implementation would likely prevent the deaths of hundreds of Americans. Since almost 5,000 people die each year waiting for an organ transplant, we must be allowed to move forward on this issue and implement the rule without further delay.

The bill does not provide any of the \$9.5 million I requested for HHS' Office of the General Counsel and Departmental Appeals Board to handle legal advice, regulations review, and litigation support, and to conduct hearings and issue decisions on nursing home enforcement cases as part of my Nursing Home Initiative. This would increase the backlog of nursing home appeals and impair Federal oversight of nursing home quality and safety standards. A reduction in funds for enforcement is inconsistent with the concerns that the GAO and the Congress have raised about this issue.

The bill cuts funds to counter bioterrorism. It funds less than half my request for CDC's stockpile, limiting the amount of vaccines, antibiotics, and other medical supplies that can be stockpiled to deploy in the event of a chemical or biological attack. In addition, the bill does not include \$13.4 million for critical FDA expedited regulatory review/approval of pharmaceuticals to combat chemical and biological agent weapons.

The bill provides full funding of \$350 million in FY 2002 for the Corporation for Public

Broadcasting. However, the bill provides only \$10 million of the \$20 million requested for the digital transition initiative in FY 2000. This funding is required to help the public broadcasting system meet the Federal deadline to establish digital broadcasting capability by May 1, 2003.

The enrolled bill delays the availability of \$10.9 billion of funding until September 29, 2000. While modest levels of delayed obligations could potentially be sustained without hurting the affected programs, the levels in the enrolled bill are excessive, resulting in delays in NIH research grants, delays in CDC immunizations for children, and delays in the delivery of health services to low income Americans through community health centers and rural health clinics.

The bill also seriously underfunds critical Departmental management activities in the Departments of Labor and Education and the Social Security Administration (SSA). For Education, these reductions would hamstring efforts to replace the Department's accounting system and undermine the new Performance-Based Organization's plans to streamline and modernize student aid computer systems. Reductions to the Department of Labor (DOL) would undercut the agency's ability to comply with the requirements of the Clinger-Cohen and Computer Security Acts, adjudicate contested claims in several of its benefits programs, and examine and update the 1996 study on Family and Medical leave policies. For SSA, the reductions would result in significantly longer waiting times for disability applicants and millions of individuals who visit SSA field offices.

In adopting an across-the-board reduction, the Congress has abdicated its responsibility to make tough choices. Governing is about making choices and selecting priorities that will serve the national interest. By choosing an across-the-board cut, the Congress has failed to meet that responsibility.

This across-the-board cut would result in indiscriminate reductions in important areas such as education, the environment, and law enforcement. In addition, this cut would have an adverse impact on certain national security programs. The indiscriminate nature of the cut would require a reduction of over \$700 million for military personnel, which would require the military services to make cuts in recruiting and lose up to 48,000 military personnel.

In adopting this cost-saving technique, the Congress is asserting that it will not have to dip into the Social Security surplus. However, this cut does not eliminate the need to dip into the Social Security surplus.

For these reasons, this across-the-board cut is not acceptable.

In addition to the specific program cuts and the 0.97 percent across-the-board reduction, the bill contains a \$121 million reduction in salaries and expenses for the agencies funded by this bill, exacerbating the problems caused by the bill's underfunding of critical Departmental management activities. If, for example, the \$121 million reduction were allocated proportionately across all agencies funded in the Labor/HHS/Education bill, HHS would have to absorb an approximately \$55 million reduction to its salaries and expenses accounts, Labor would be cut by about \$14 million, Education by about \$5 million, and SSA by some \$45 million. This would dramatically affect the delivery of essential human services and education programs and the protection of employees in the workplace.

With respect to the District of Columbia component of the bill, I am pleased that the majority and minority in the Congress were able to come together to pass a version of the District of Columbia Appropriations Bill that I would sign if presented to me separately and as it is currently constructed. While I continue to object to remaining riders, some of the highly objectionable provisions that would have intruded upon local citizens' right to make decisions about local matters have been modified from previous versions of the bill. That is a fair compromise. We will continue to strenuously urge the Congress to keep such riders off of the FY 2001 D.C. Appropriations Bill.

I commend the Congress for providing the Federal funds I requested for the District of Columbia. The bill includes essential funding for District Courts and Corrections and the D.C. Offender Supervision Agency and provides requested funds for a new tuition assistance program for District of Columbia residents. The bill also includes funding to promote the adoption of children in the District's foster care system, to support the Children's National Medical Center, to assist the Metropolitan Police Department in eliminating open-air drug trafficking in the District, and for drug testing and treatment, among other programs. However, I continue to

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object to remaining riders that violate the principles of home rule.

I look forward to working with the Congress to craft an appropriations bill that I can support,

and to passage of one that will facilitate our shared objectives.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 3, 1999.

Statement on Proposed Appropriations for the District of Columbia *November 3, 1999*

After bipartisan negotiations to resolve the District of Columbia appropriations bill, Congress and my administration agreed to provide essential funding for the District while modifying some of the most objectionable provisions infringing on the rights of local citizens to make decisions about local matters, the principle of home rule.

I would have signed this legislation, but the House attached to it highly objectionable legislation that would have failed to fund important priorities in education, health, and other areas and would have resulted in an across-the-board cut in funding for important programs from defense and veterans' programs to education, law enforcement, and the environment.

Unfortunately, the House voted today on a replacement DC bill that runs contrary to the earlier bipartisan agreement and undercuts the progress that has been made for the benefit of the people of the District of Columbia. The consensus bill on the District passed by both Houses remains acceptable to me, and I would sign it if it were presented as a stand-alone bill or unattached to objectionable legislation. I urge Congress to act for the benefit of the citizens of the District and our Nation's Capital by sending me the agreed-upon legislation, unencumbered by objectionable legislation or provisions.

Statement on the Verdict in the Matthew Shepard Murder Trial *November 3, 1999*

Today's verdict closes a chapter in the tragic story of the killing of Matthew Shepard. Although the verdict cannot bring Matthew back, perhaps it will bring some sense of closure to Dennis and Judy Shepard, as well as other family and friends of Matthew. The First Lady and I offer our prayers for them and our hope that their memories of Matthew's life will sustain them in the difficult time ahead.

The verdict is a dramatic statement that we are determined to have a tolerant, law-abiding

nation that celebrates our differences rather than despising them. Our Nation must unite in outrage against hate-based violence. We cannot surrender to those on the fringe of our society who lash out at those who are different. Their crimes impose a particular cost on society by tearing at the social fabric. It is my continued hope that together, as a nation, we will work to repair that fabric.