

backlogs mount. These fine Americans have offered themselves to serve our country—and they are entitled to an up-or-down vote. Election year politics should not be used as an excuse to slow down the confirmation process.

This is a good day for our country. But we must keep going. It's what our nominees deserve and what justice demands.

Statement on House Action on Minimum Wage Legislation

March 9, 2000

The minimum wage must be raised, but not with a bill that stacks the deck against America's working families. This bill repeals key overtime protections, could reduce pension coverage for many families, and includes risky tax giveaways that threaten our prosperity and the future of Social Security and Medicare. Once again, Republicans in the House of Representatives have

demonstrated that they would rather fight for special interests than give working families the raise they deserve.

I will veto the bill Republicans in the House passed tonight if it comes to my desk. Congress should send me a bill I can sign: a clean, straightforward bill that raises the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report on Federal Advisory Committees

March 9, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As provided by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended (Public Law 92-463; 5 U.S.C., App. 2, 6(c)), I hereby submit the *Twenty-seventh Annual Report on Federal Advisory Committees*, covering fiscal year 1998.

In keeping with my commitment to create a more responsive government, the executive branch continues to implement my policy of maintaining the number of advisory committees within the ceiling of 534 required by Executive Order 12838 of February 10, 1993. Accordingly, the number of discretionary advisory committees (established under general congressional authorizations) was again held to substantially below that number. During fiscal year 1998, 460 discretionary committees advised executive branch officials. The number of discretionary committees supported represents a 43 percent reduction in the 801 in existence at the beginning of my Administration.

Through the planning process required by Executive Order 12838, the total number of advisory committees specifically mandated by statute also continues to decline. The 388 such groups

supported at the end of fiscal year 1998 represents a modest decrease from the 391 in existence at the end of fiscal year 1997. However, compared to the 439 advisory committees mandated by statute at the beginning of my Administration, the net total for fiscal year 1998 reflects nearly a 12 percent decrease since 1993.

The executive branch has worked jointly with the Congress to establish a partnership whereby all advisory committees that are required by statute are regularly reviewed through the legislative reauthorization process and that any such new committees proposed through legislation are closely linked to compelling national interests. Furthermore, my Administration will continue to direct the estimated costs to fund required statutory groups in fiscal year 1999, or \$45.8 million, toward supporting initiatives that reflect the highest priority public involvement efforts.

Combined savings achieved through actions taken during fiscal year 1998 to eliminate all advisory committees that are no longer needed, or that have completed their missions, totaled \$7.6 million. This reflects the termination of 47 committees, originally established under both