

credit to speed development of such critical vaccines for the developing world.

Fighting AIDS worldwide is not just the right thing to do; it's the smart thing. In our tightly connected world, infectious disease anywhere is a threat to public health everywhere. AIDS threatens the economies of the poorest countries, the stability of friendly nations, the future of fragile democracies. Already, HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death in Africa and increasingly threatens Asia and the states of the former Soviet Union. In the hardest hit countries, AIDS is leaving students without teachers, patients without doctors, and children without parents. Today alone, African families will hold nearly 6,000 funerals for loved ones who died of AIDS.

But we still have time to do a world of good if we act now. This bill is an important step in the fight against AIDS. It's also a symbol of the good we can accomplish when we work together in a bipartisan spirit. In that same spirit, Congress still has time to get important work done for the American people this fall. When they return in a few weeks, they'll still have time to put progress before partisanship to pass

a real Patients' Bill of Rights; affordable Medicare prescription drug benefits for all our seniors; to set aside the Medicare surplus so that it can only be spent to strengthen Medicare, not raided for tax cuts we can't afford; to pass tax cuts that help middle class families send their kids to college and provide long-term care for their loved ones.

We should also pass a strong hate crimes bill and commonsense gun legislation. We should rebuild our crumbling schools, hire the rest of those 100,000 teachers, and raise the minimum wage.

These are big challenges, but if we make the tough choices together, we'll keep our progress and prosperity going.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:57 p.m. on August 18 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 18 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on Signing the Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act of 2000 *August 19, 2000*

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 3519, the "Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act of 2000," which represents the latest U.S. effort in the long-term global fight against HIV/AIDS and its related threat of tuberculosis.

In July 1999, Vice President Gore and I launched the Administration's interagency "Leadership and Investment in Fighting an Epidemic" (LIFE) initiative to expand our funding for global HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment in the worst affected developing countries. With bipartisan support, the Congress appropriated the additional \$100 million that we requested for FY 2000 to enhance these efforts. For FY 2001, my budget includes an additional \$100 million for the LIFE initiative.

While the LIFE initiative greatly strengthens the foundation of a comprehensive response to the pandemic, the United States clearly understands that there is much more to be done. The Joint United Nations Program on HIV/

AIDS has estimated that it will take \$1.5 billion annually to establish an effective HIV prevention program in sub-Saharan Africa and an additional \$1.5 billion annually to deliver basic care and treatment to people with AIDS in the region.

H.R. 3519 takes some of the additional steps to broaden the global effort to combat this worldwide epidemic. It provides enhanced bilateral authorities and authorizes funding for the Agency for International Development's HIV/AIDS programs; authorizes new funding for the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations and the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative; and authorizes the creation of a World Bank AIDS Trust Fund that is intended to create a new, multilateral funding mechanism to support AIDS prevention and care programs in the most grievously affected countries.

The United States, however, cannot and should not battle AIDS alone. This crisis will require the active engagement of all segments

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of all societies working together. Every bilateral donor, every multilateral lending agency, the corporate community, the foundation community, the religious community, and every host government of a developing nation must do its part to provide the leadership and resources necessary to turn this tide. It can and must be done.

There is currently no vaccine or cure for HIV/AIDS, and we are at the beginning of a global pandemic, not the end. What we see in Africa today is just the tip of the iceberg. There must be a sense of urgency to work together with our partners in Africa and around the world, to learn from both our failures and our successes, and to share this experience with those countries that now stand on the brink of disaster. Millions of lives—perhaps hundreds of millions—hang in the balance. That is why this legislation is so important.

I wish to thank and congratulate our congressional partners who worked hard to make this bipartisan legislation a reality: Representatives Leach, Lee, LaFalce, Gejdenson, Gilman, Jackson-Lee, Maloney of New York, and Pelosi, and Senators Kerry, Frist, Biden, Boxer, Durbin, Feingold, Helms, Leahy, Moynihan, and Smith of Oregon.

While I strongly support this legislation, certain provisions seem to direct the Administration

on how to proceed in negotiations related to the development of the World Bank AIDS Trust Fund. Because these provisions appear to require the Administration to take certain positions in the international arena, they raise constitutional concerns. As such, I will treat them as precatory.

The United States has been engaged in the fight against AIDS since the 1980s. Increasingly, we have come to realize that when it comes to AIDS, neither the crisis nor the opportunity to address it have borders. We have a great deal to learn from the experiences of other countries, and the suffering of citizens in our global village touches us all. The pages of history reveal moments in time when the global community came together and collectively found “the higher angels of our nature.” In a world living with AIDS, we must reach for one of those historic moments now—it is the only way to avoid paying the price later.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
August 19, 2000.

NOTE: H.R. 3519, approved August 19, was assigned Public Law No. 106–264.

Statement on Overcrowding of Schools

August 21, 2000

This year a record 53 million children will enroll in American schools, according to a new report released today by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley. Over the last 10 years, our public schools have grown by 6.6 million students, resulting in overcrowded classrooms and strained school facilities. To meet the needs of America’s growing student population, we need to build new schools and modernize existing ones.

For too long, the Republican leadership in Congress has failed to act on tax breaks pro-

posed by my administration to build and modernize 6,000 schools. They have also failed to pass my proposal to fund urgent repairs such as leaky roofs, faulty fire alarms, and inadequate furnaces at 25,000 schools across the country. I remain strongly committed to working with Members of both parties to help create safe and modern places for America’s students to learn. Our children deserve no less.