

Statement on Hate Crimes Legislation

October 12, 2000

Today marks 2 years since young Matthew Shepard was beaten unconscious, tied to a fence, and left to die. At the time of Matthew's death, I expressed my sympathy for the family and my outrage about the heinous nature of the crime. Since then, Matthew's death has been a call to action to many across the country committed to doing more to prevent and prosecute hate crimes. Many have worked tirelessly, along with my administration, to pass meaningful hate crimes legislation this year. Their efforts led to two strong bipartisan votes—one in the House and one in the Senate—in favor of hate crimes

legislation. Unfortunately, just last week, the Republican leadership—denying the will of a bipartisan majority in both the House and the Senate—stripped hate crimes legislation from the Department of Defense Authorization bill. This action is wrong, and the will of the majority should be respected. We must not let the fear of people different from ourselves prevent this legislation from passing. Working with the bipartisan coalition that supports hate crimes legislation, I will continue to fight to make sure this important work gets done.

Statement on Senate Action on Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Legislation

October 12, 2000

I am pleased that the Senate has passed a VA/HUD bill that will open the doors of opportunity in America for those who need it most, build on our agenda for national energy security, and strengthen our commitment to the environment. With this legislation—which includes key provisions negotiated by my budget team—we take an important step toward addressing critical national priorities and opening the doors of opportunity for many more Americans.

This legislation builds upon my opportunity agenda with increased funding for economic development through empowerment zones and enterprise communities and community development financial institutions, all part of my new markets initiative, and with 79,000 new housing vouchers for low income families. This agreement also increases support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's emergency food and shelter programs which work with States and communities to help the homeless and hungry. We are also strengthening our commitment to national service with additional support for the Corporation for National and Community Service, the first increase since the inception of this critical volunteer agency in 1993.

With this legislation, we support the significant expansion of cutting-edge basic scientific research at the National Science Foundation. This includes research in nanotechnology—the manipulation of matter at the molecular and atomic level—which holds the promise of scientific breakthroughs in a wide range of fields. It also advances scientific research through support for space exploration at NASA. At especially at this time of elevated fuel prices, I am pleased that this bill provides resources for technologies to increase fuel efficiency, an essential part of our long-term strategy to reduce dependence on oil.

This agreement also contains increased funding for enforcement of the Nation's environmental laws and for the cleanup of polluted waterways. The agreement we reached drops or fixes several objectionable riders that threatened to harm our environment. Yet, while we were able to ameliorate the impact of the remaining riders, we were not able to rid this bill entirely of objectionable provisions, in particular the rider relating to ozone.

This agreement also provides the additional \$1.5 billion I requested for the Department of

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Veterans Affairs, the largest increase ever requested by any administration. This funding will support efforts to improve veterans' medical care and the delivery of key services, including disability benefits.

This agreement is clear proof of the progress we can achieve when we work together to address the Nation's priorities.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism

October 12, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 9, 1999, and signed on behalf of the United States of America on January 10, 2000. The report of the Department of State with respect to the Convention is also transmitted for the information of the Senate.

In recent years, the United States has increasingly focused world attention on the importance of combating terrorist financing as a means of choking off the resources that fuel international terrorism. While international terrorists do not generally seek financial gain as an end, they actively solicit and raise money and other resources to attract and retain adherents and to support their presence and activities both in the United States and abroad. The present Convention is aimed at cutting off the sustenance that these groups need to operate. This Convention provides, for the first time, an obligation that States Parties criminalize such conduct and establishes an international legal framework for cooperation among States Parties directed toward prevention of such financing and ensuring the prosecution and punishment of offenders, wherever found.

Article 2 of the Convention states that any person commits an offense within the meaning of the Convention "if that person by any means, directly or indirectly, unlawfully and wilfully, provides or collects funds with the intention that they should be used or in the knowledge that they are to be used, in full or in part, in order to carry out" either of two categories of terrorist acts defined in the Convention. The first category includes any act that constitutes an offense

within the scope of and as defined in one of the counterterrorism treaties listed in the Annex to the Convention. The second category encompasses any other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of the act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.

The Convention imposes binding legal obligations upon States Parties either to submit for prosecution or to extradite any person within their jurisdiction who commits an offense as defined in Article 2 of the Convention, attempts to commit such an act, participates as an accomplice, organizes or directs others to commit such an offense, or in any other way contributes to the commission of an offense by a group of persons acting with a common purpose. A State Party is subject to these obligations without regard to the place where the alleged act covered by Article 2 took place.

States Parties to the Convention will also be obligated to provide one another legal assistance in investigations or criminal or extradition proceedings brought in respect of the offenses set forth in Article 2.

Legislation necessary to implement the Convention will be submitted to the Congress separately.

This Convention is a critical new weapon in the campaign against the scourge of international terrorism. I hope that all countries will become Parties to this Convention at the earliest possible time. I recommend, therefore, that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Convention, subject to the understanding, declaration and reservation that are described