

Nov. 1 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

countries; and (2) granting the Secretary of Transportation new authority to develop an early warning system that requires automobile manufacturers and their suppliers to submit information and analysis concerning possible safety defects in vehicles and equipment.

With this new authority, however, comes the important responsibility to notify the public, as quickly as possible, of any relevant investigative efforts and other safety-related information submitted to the Secretary by the manufacturers or their suppliers. Thus, today I am also directing the Secretary of Transportation to implement the information disclosure requirements of the Act in a manner that assures maximum public availability of information.

Finally, among many other important measures, the Act also includes proposals put forth by my Administration to provide for longer recall periods, to increase civil penalties for violations of the motor vehicle safety laws, and to authorize more funds for investigations into defective cars and their parts. I strongly support all of these provisions.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 1, 2000.

NOTE: H.R. 5164, approved November 1, was assigned Public Law No. 106-414.

Statement on Signing an Extension of the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000

November 1, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 5234, which extends the applicability of the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000 to certain former spouses of deceased Hmong veterans. This bill will make these widows eligible for the eased naturalization requirements provided by the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000, which I signed into law in May of this year. Many of these widows and their families sacrificed a great deal as their spouses fought in support of the U.S. military during the conflict in Southeast Asia. Many have had to struggle to make a new life in this country,

and to raise their families, and despite language and cultural barriers, they have made significant contributions to our Nation. This legislation will help ensure that they become full-fledged citizens in our society.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 1, 2000.

NOTE: H.R. 5234, approved November 1, was assigned Public Law No. 106-415.

Statement on Signing the Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000

November 1, 2000

Today I have signed into law S. 1402, the "Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000." S. 1402 expresses the Nation's continued gratitude to our veterans by reauthorizing and making improvements to a wide range of veterans' benefits and programs.

I am pleased that the Congress has included in S. 1402 significant benefit increases and other

enhancements to the All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program, which is commonly known as the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB). This program helps the men and women who have bravely served their country in the Armed Forces to adjust to civilian life. In addition, it is a major tool that the Armed Forces use to recruit highly qualified servicemembers. This

Act increases the basic MGIB benefit for a 3-year period of service to \$650 monthly and the rate for a 2-year period of service to \$528 monthly. These rates represent the single largest benefit increase in MGIB's 15-year history and are similar to the levels of increase the Vice President and I proposed earlier this year.

This legislation also includes increases for education allowances for the survivors and dependents of veterans, resulting in a \$588 monthly benefit for a full-time student. Further, this Act will protect these survivors' and dependents' benefits against inflation by providing annual cost-of-living adjustments like those adjustments that already apply to veterans' education benefits.

Beyond the significant enhancements to education assistance, this legislation makes several important changes to disability compensation benefits. Among them are provisions that will extend monthly disability allowances, vocational training, and health care to women Vietnam veterans' children who are born with certain medical conditions. These women veterans made huge sacrifices to protect our freedom, and it is only just that their children with resulting medical conditions be compensated. Similar benefits are currently afforded to such children who were born with spina bifida, but this Act will expand benefits beyond that one condition.

This legislation also enhances benefits for Filipino veterans of World War II who currently receive disability compensation and burial benefits at a rate equal to one-half the rate that U.S. veterans receive. It reinforces the long-overdue step taken by the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001, that authorizes the payment of these benefits at the full rate to Filipino veterans who have become U.S. citizens or are permanent residents and reside in the United States. In addition, this Act extends to these veterans the eligibility for burial in national cemeteries.

These benefits are just a few examples of the effects that this comprehensive bill will have on improving benefits and services for our veterans. On behalf of a grateful Nation, I am pleased to sign S. 1402. We are indebted to our veterans for the contributions that they have made to protect our security and well-being.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 1, 2000.

NOTE: S. 1402, approved November 1, was assigned Public Law No. 106-419.

Statement on Signing Legislation To Amend the Inspector General Act of 1978

November 1, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 1707. This bill provides that the Inspector General of the Tennessee Valley Authority is to be appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. Current law provides for the appointment of the Inspector General by the Authority's Board of Directors. Under this legislation, the appointment of the Authority's Inspector General would be made consistent with the appointment of inspectors general at other large agencies. This is an appropriate change.

This bill also authorizes the establishment within the Department of the Treasury of a forensic laboratory to provide services to the Federal Government's Offices of Inspectors General. In implementing this legislation, my Administration will take care both to avoid duplication with other, ongoing forensic activities, and to ensure effective and efficient coordination and cooperation with existing Federal forensic laboratories, such as those operated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Secret Service, and the Postal Service.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON