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Statement on Signing the Economic Espionage Act of 1996

October 11, 1996

Today I have signed into law H.R. 3723, the ''Economic Espionage Act of 1996.'' It strengthens our protections against the theft or misuse of proprietary business information. It will help us crack down on acts like software piracy and copyright infringement that cost American businesses billions of dollars in lost revenues. And it will advance our national security.

This legislation makes the theft or misappropriation of trade secrets a Federal crime. The Act provides distinct monetary penalties and prison sentences for defined acts of economic espionage and trade secret theft. It also provides for criminal forfeiture of property used in or derived from economic espionage or trade secret theft and preserves the confidentiality of trade secrets in court proceedings.

This Act is an outstanding example of my Administration, the Congress, and the business community working together to provide law enforcement with the tools to combat the problems of economic espionage and trade secret theft.

Trade secrets are an integral part of virtually every sector of our economy and are essential to maintaining the health and competitiveness of critical industries operating in the United States. Economic espionage and trade secret theft threaten our Nation's national security and economic well-being.

Until today, Federal law has not accorded appropriate or adequate protection to trade secrets, making it difficult to prosecute thefts involving this type of information. Law enforcement officials relied instead on antiquated laws that have not kept pace with the technological advances of modern society. This Act establishes a comprehensive and systemic approach to trade secret theft and economic espionage, facilitating investigations and prosecutions.

This bill also strengthens protection for our national information infrastructure by eliminating gaps in the criminal laws covering attacks against computers and the information they contain. Importantly, it does so with without impeding the development of legitimate uses of the information infrastructure.

This Act will protect the trade secrets of all businesses operating in the United States, foreign and domestic alike, from economic espionage and trade secret theft and deter and punish those who would intrude into, damage, or steal from computer networks. I am pleased to sign it into law.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 11, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 3723, approved October 11, was assigned Public Law No. 104–294.

Statement on Signing the Sustainable Fisheries Act

October 11, 1996

Today I have signed into law S. 39, the ''Sustainable Fisheries Act.'' This Act represents a bipartisan effort to address the problems facing our Nation's fisheries, both commercial and recreational, and will greatly improve the future management of important fishery resources. I am delighted that the legislation addresses many of the conservation and management issues identified by my Administration's proposal of 1994.

Most important are new measures to prevent our fish stocks from being overfished and to ensure that already depressed stocks are rebuilt to levels that produce maximum sustainable yields from the fisheries. The Act includes a new national standard to minimize the unintentional catch of nontarget fish. The long-term importance of habitat to fish stocks is highlighted by the Act's requirement that essential fish habitats be identified in each fishery management plan.

The establishment of user fees for individual fishing quota and community development quota programs is a step in the direction of ensuring some repayment for the commercial use of this national resource. By refocusing management goals and mandating tighter control over the factors affecting fish stocks, this Act brings the Nation closer to the vast long-term benefits of sustainable fisheries.

I am, however, disappointed that the Congress chose to include in the Act several objectionable provisions. A number of provisions require specific management actions in specific fisheries or areas. The regional fishery management councils are the proper forum for recommending specific fishery management actions to the Department of Commerce. Those who use and enjoy our fishery resources should be fully involved in the management of these stocks.

Section 105(b)(2) directs the Secretary of State, in cooperation with the Secretary of Commerce, to seek to secure international agreements on the subject of bycatch reduction. Under our Constitution, it is the President who articulates the Nation's foreign policy and who determines the timing and subject matter of our negotiations with foreign nations. Accordingly, in keeping with past practice, I shall treat this provision as advisory, not mandatory.

The prohibition in section 109(i) on the Secretary of Commerce's ability to repeal a fishery management plan without approval by a vote of three-quarters of the Fishery Management Council raises serious concerns under the Appointments Clause of the Constitution. I am directing the Secretary of Commerce to treat this provision as advisory, not mandatory.

Section 107 does not provide adequate protections against conflicts of interest on the part of members of the fishery management councils. A council member will be able to vote in many situations where the member could derive a significant financial gain from the matter. Further, the conflict provisions will not be consistent with other Government-wide conflict laws.

Successful implementation of S. 39 will require the full cooperation of Federal, State, and Tribal governments, the fishing industry, the fishery management councils, the conservation community, and the Congress. My Administration is committed to doing its part.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 11, 1996.

NOTE: S. 39, approved October 11, was assigned Public Law No. 104–297.

Statement on Signing the Health Centers Consolidation Act of 1996

October 11, 1996

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 1044, the ''Health Centers Consolidation Act of 1996.'' This bill will ensure that millions of the Nation's most vulnerable citizens continue to have access to high-quality, affordable, community-based, and family-focused primary and preventive health care services.

The bill reauthorizes and consolidates four Federal health primary care and prevention programs: community health centers, migrant health centers, health care for the homeless, and health care for residents of public housing programs. By empowering communities to design and develop their own local solutions to their health care access problems, this legislation will help to improve the health status of our Nation's medically underserved, low-income populations. The Nation's health centers, comprised of over 700 organizations and 2,100 service delivery sites, provides health care services to almost 8 million people annually. They act as the safety net for millions of people who are disproportionately poor and have inadequate or no health insurance.

Another important feature of S. 1044 is the establishment of a new Federal loan guarantee program to support the development and operation of managed care networks. Health centers across the country have come to recognize the critical importance of forming or being a part of integrated, managed care health systems. As the delivery of health care moves toward managed care arrangements, particularly for the Medicaid population, health centers must be able to participate in these arrangements in order to continue to ensure access to health care services for medically underserved individuals. The new loan guarantee program will assist the health centers to function effectively in this changing environment.

The bill will also reinforce the policies of this Administration to streamline Federal programs. It will consolidate grants without decreasing services, thereby easing the burden on communities applying for assistance and reducing the Federal cost of administering these programs.