

If it sets a framework and says that in the 21st century in the economy we're going to be living in, other things being equal, we ought always to be balancing our books, I agree with that. I just don't think you—we may tie our hands more than we will achieve. So what I'm going to focus my energies on is getting the balanced budget. I don't have a vote in the Congress. My voice counts, presumably, but I don't have a vote. But I do have the responsibility to help the American people get the balanced budget, and that's what I'm going to focus my energies on.

**Q.** So you don't reject the amendment out of hand?

**The President.** Well, what I—I don't believe we need it, and it can't be an excuse—for a long time I was afraid it would be an excuse to throw the burden on somebody else, by the Congress, because by definition you have to have it down the road. It takes awhile to ratify. But my belief is that you—I don't believe that we need it, but if we have it, it ought to be able to be implemented in a way that actually works and gives the country what it needs to manage a recession because, you know, we won't always have—someday down the road we'll have another bad patch in the economy. I mean, we just know that's going to happen.

You know, you don't have—no one has a total trouble-free life; no country has a trouble-free economy. Someday down the road—and we just don't want an amendment to wind up making our recession worse and causing us to do things that are counterproductive that you would never do in a recession. In a recession you would never raise taxes, and you wouldn't throw people who are unemployed through no fault of their own off of health care eligibility because you were trying to balance the budget.

So that's the only thing I'm—if the escape hatch is good, then we'll manage it the best way we can. The American people—we're a very practical people. We'll find a way to deal with the amendment if the amendment—the thing I want us to do is, if you look at this global economy, look how much more economic activity was generated in America when we lowered the deficit and lowered interest rates, and it totally overwhelmed the contractionary effects of reducing the deficit

by holding spending down. And we would be better off in this kind of economy always targeting a balanced budget unless there is a substantial recession, in which case we don't want to raise taxes on people when they don't have as much money as they should anyway. That's what I'm worried about.

So that's why I'm telling you I'm going to be working on putting a balanced budget in there. If we get it, if we can get the Congress to pass a plan that will achieve that, we'll have the desired economic effect, short term and long term, and then whatever happens with the amendment will happen.

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President.** Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:18 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. H.R. 4236, approved November 12, was assigned Public Law No. 104-333.

### **Statement on Signing the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996**

*November 12, 1996*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 4236, the "Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996," a comprehensive bill addressing the management of the Nation's invaluable national parks, forests, and other natural resources.

I am pleased the Congress passed this legislation with bipartisan support in both Houses and has removed numerous provisions to which my Administration strongly objected.

The Act will create or improve almost 120 national parks, trails, rivers, or historical sites in 41 of our States. As President Teddy Roosevelt said: "[t]he nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, not impaired, in value." This Act will help ensure that we follow that advice and protect for the next generation some of our most valuable natural and historical resources.

One of the most important provisions that my Administration supported would improve the management of the Presidio in San Francisco. This military post, dating from 1776,

includes both beautiful open spaces appropriate for National Park Service management and hundreds of unused buildings requiring a more innovative approach. This Act establishes a government corporation, known as the Presidio Trust, to refurbish and lease these buildings quickly and efficiently, but in a manner consistent with overall park management requirements.

Another laudable provision authorizes appropriations of \$17.5 million to help the New York-New Jersey Palisades Interstate Park Commission to acquire lands within the Sterling Forest Reserve, just 40 miles from midtown Manhattan. This is one of the last areas of pristine forest in the Northeast and the area is critical for supplying safe drinking water to northern New Jersey.

I am also pleased that the Act establishes the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Kansas. The North American Continent was once covered by over 400,000 square miles of tallgrass prairie. Today, less than 1 percent remains. This Act will help to restore 11,000 acres of tallgrass prairie, an ecosystem of grass as tall as 9 feet, and includes trees, flowers, birds and other wildlife. This ecosystem is nationally significant and the Preserve is a welcome addition to the National Park System.

My Administration supports many other provisions in this omnibus legislation, including designation of 10 separate nonfederal national heritage areas in Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, South Carolina, Iowa, Ohio, and New York. Other provisions would help to preserve the Nation's cultural heritage by authorizing memorials, protecting historic areas, designating the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail in Alabama, and authorizing the establishment of a Martin Luther King, Jr., memorial in the District of Columbia.

This Act also includes scores of park boundary adjustments, land exchanges, and provisions to assist agencies in protecting national parks, forests, and public lands.

At the same time, the bill deletes almost all of the provisions of the earlier conference agreement that my Administration had found objectionable. These provisions include those that would have adversely affected the

Tongass National Forest in Alaska, the Shenandoah National Park and Richmond Battlefields National Park in Virginia, the Sequoia National Park in California, and other national parks and Federal lands. Unfortunately, the Act still includes a few objectionable provisions. Among them is a provision that changes the status of about 70 acres of fragile land that was previously protected as part of the Coastal Barrier Resources System. Prior to my signing of the Act this land could only be developed at private expense. Now, this land will be eligible for Federal development subsidies in the form of infrastructure funding and flood insurance. The taxpayer should not bear the risk of development in these damage-prone areas, and my Administration will strongly resist any similar legislative efforts in the future. In addition, several provisions exempt specific land transactions from environmental laws. Where these provisions allow, my Administration will work to complete the transactions in full compliance with our environmental laws.

I must also note that two sections of the Act require careful construction and application to avoid violating the Appointments Clause of the Constitution. First, to avoid an unconstitutional limitation on the President's power to appoint officers, I will regard the limitations on my ability to make appointments to the Board of Directors of the Presidio Trust as advisory. The second issue involves officers of the National Park Service (NPS). To avoid an unconstitutional congressional removal of an officer, I will not construe the Act to require that the current NPS Director be subjected to the new appointment process established by the bill. Further, appointments to the NPS Deputy Director positions created by the Act must be made in a manner consistent with the Appointments Clause in order for them to exercise significant governmental authority.

As I said on September 29th following House passage of this legislation, this is not a perfect bill. But overall, the Act represents a significant step forward in the conservation and management of our national parks and other Federal lands for the benefit of this and future generations.

I am pleased to sign H.R. 4236 into law.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
November 12, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 4236, approved November 12, was assigned Public Law No. 104-333.

**Notice—Continuation of Emergency Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction**

*November 12, 1996*

On November 14, 1994, by Executive Order 12938, I declared a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States posed by the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons (“weapons of mass destruction”) and the means of delivering such weapons. Because the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivering them continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, the national emergency declared on November 14, 1994, and extended on November 14, 1995, must continue in effect beyond November 14, 1996. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12938.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
November 12, 1996.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:35 a.m., November 12, 1996]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on November 13.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on Weapons of Mass Destruction**

*November 12, 1996*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

On November 14, 1994, in light of the dangers of the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons (“weapons of mass destruction”—(WMD)) and of the means of delivering such weapons, I issued Executive Order 12938, and declared a national emergency under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*). Under section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), the national emergency terminates on the anniversary date of its declaration, unless I publish in the *Federal Register* and transmit to the Congress a notice of its continuation.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Therefore, I am hereby advising the Congress that the national emergency declared on November 14, 1994, and extended on November 14, 1995, must continue in effect beyond November 14, 1996. Accordingly, I have extended the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12938 and have sent the attached notice of extension to the *Federal Register* for publication.

The following report is made pursuant to section 204 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703) and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1641(c)), regarding activities taken and money spent pursuant to the emergency declaration. Additional information on nuclear, missile, and/or chemical and biological weapons (CBW) nonproliferation efforts is contained in the most recent annual Report on the Proliferation of Missiles and Essential Components of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Weapons, provided to the Congress pursuant to section 1097 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993 (Public Law 102-190), also known as the “Nonproliferation Report,” and the most recent annual report provided to the Congress pursuant to section 308 of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Con-