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NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. The reports detailing the cancellation were published in the *Federal Register* on November 24.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Line Item Vetoes of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998

November 20, 1997

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

In accordance with the Line Item Veto Act, I hereby cancel the dollar amounts of discretionary budget authority, as specified in the attached reports, contained in the ''Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998'' (H.R. 2160). I have determined that the cancellation of these amounts will reduce the Federal budget deficit, will not impair any essential Government functions, and will not harm the national interest. This letter, together with its attachments, constitutes a special message under section 1022 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, as amended.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. The reports detailing the cancellation were published in the *Federal Register* on November 21.

Remarks on Signing the Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act of 1997

November 21, 1997

Thank you very much. After Secretary Shalala made you all laugh, she reminded me that she has to go catch a plane. She's going on a trip to Asia, and she's winding up in Butung. She said, ''You know, some people think Butung is the most beautiful place in the world, and the King is there, and he's got four wives, and they're all sisters.'' And she said, ''I wonder if he'd like four and a half.'' [*Laughter*] I thought the private joke was even better than the public one, so I thought I'd give credit.

Let me, first of all, thank the Vice President and his reinventing Government staff for the work that they have done on the FDA and Secretary Shalala and all the people at HHS and Sally Katzen and the people at OMB and folks in the White House, the industry leaders who are here. But let me especially thank the Members of Congress, all those who are here and at least two who are not, Congressman Bliley and Congressman Dingell, for the work that—this really astonishing work.

It was a 2-year process. This bill passed by a voice vote in both Houses. And yet it is a very significant overhaul in the work of the Food and Drug Administration. It also, it seems to me, is symbolic of what we should be doing as a country.

The FDA, which was created under Theodore Roosevelt, as the Vice President said, is really, I think, one of the signal achievements of the Progressive Era. Why was it necessary? Because more and more people were moving from the farm to the city and making a living in factories, and instead of consuming the food that they raised on their own farms, they had to go down and buy the food from somebody else. And more and more people had access to doctors, and doctors had access to medicine that was being discovered that they couldn't know everything about. So somebody needed to say, ''Hey, this medicine is okay. We've tested it. It's okay. You can give it to your patients in Iowa or Oregon or Arizona or Alabama.''

And so a whole new world of possibility opened when people could move from farm to factory and when people could have access to a doctor when they couldn't see one before. But there needed to be someone who said, here's the public interest in trying to make sure the food is safe and the drugs are safe, and they do what they're supposed to do.