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have made America a better place; you've made the world a finer place.

And as we look to the new century, I hope that as time goes on we will be known more and more for things beyond our wealth and power, that go to the wealth and power of our spirit. Insofar as that happens, it will be because of you and people like you. And it was a privilege for all of us to honor you today.

I would like to ask all of you here to join me in a toast to the 1999 winners of the Medal of Arts and the Medal of Humanities.

[*At this point, the participants drank a toast.*]

The President. And welcome. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to humorist Garrison Keillor, recipient, National Humanities Medal.

Statement on Signing the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2000

September 30, 1999

I have signed into law H.R. 2605, the ''Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2000,'' which provides $21.4 billion in discretionary budget authority for the programs of the Department of Energy, the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers, and several smaller agencies.

The Act provides necessary funding to maintain my Administration's commitment to ensuring the safety and reliability of our Nation's nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing. The Act also provides funding to develop and protect the Nation's water resources.

I am disappointed that the Congress has not included full funding for my request for the Spallation Neutron Source, for additional safeguards and security reforms at the Department of Energy laboratories, or for research and development of renewable energy sources. I am also disappointed that the Congress has provided no funding for the Next Generation Internet and Information Technology Initiatives. Also, I note that the bill contains language that prohibits the Army Corps of Engineers from studying the full range of options for salmon recovery in the Pacific Northwest. I will continue to work with the Congress on this important national priority. Finally, I am disappointed that the Congress has not enacted my Harbor Services Fund proposal, which would provide a stable source of funding for port and harbor activities and free up funds for other priority projects and programs. My Administration will work with the Congress on options for financing and increasing support for these initiatives in the future.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
September 29, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2605, approved September 29, was assigned Public Law No. 106–60. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 30.

Remarks on Signing the Continuing Resolution and an Exchange With Reporters

September 30, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. I wanted to talk to you before I leave for New York about two developments affecting our economy and the progress we are making to build a stronger one.

Today we have further evidence that our economic strategy of fiscal discipline, investment in our people, and expanded trade is working. In the 12 years before I came to Washington, irresponsible policies here quadrupled our debt. That led us to high interest rates and high unemployment, stagnant wages, and low growth. The Vice President and I came here determined to change all that, to put the American people first and give them the tools to turn around the American economy.

Over the last 6½ years, the results speak for themselves: the longest peacetime expansion in history, more than 19 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years, the largest surplus and the highest homeownership in history.