

about \$5 million, and SSA by some \$45 million. This would dramatically affect the delivery of essential human services and education programs and the protection of employees in the workplace.

With respect to the District of Columbia component of the bill, I am pleased that the majority and minority in the Congress were able to come together to pass a version of the District of Columbia Appropriations Bill that I would sign if presented to me separately and as it is currently constructed. While I continue to object to remaining riders, some of the highly objectionable provisions that would have intruded upon local citizens' right to make decisions about local matters have been modified from previous versions of the bill. That is a fair compromise. We will continue to strenuously urge the Congress to keep such riders off of the FY 2001 D.C. Appropriations Bill.

I commend the Congress for providing the Federal funds I requested for the District of Columbia. The bill includes essential funding for District Courts and Corrections and the D.C. Offender Supervision Agency and provides requested funds for a new tuition assistance program for District of Columbia residents. The bill also includes funding to promote the adoption of children in the District's foster care system, to support the Children's National Medical Center, to assist the Metropolitan Police Department in eliminating open-air drug trafficking in the District, and for drug testing and treatment, among other programs. However, I continue to object to remaining riders that violate the principles of home rule.

I look forward to working with the Congress to craft an appropriations bill that I can support, and to passage of one that will facilitate our shared objectives.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
November 3, 1999.

Statement on District of Columbia Appropriations Legislation

November 3, 1999

After bipartisan negotiations to resolve the District of Columbia appropriations bill,

Congress and my administration agreed to provide essential funding for the District while modifying some of the most objectionable provisions infringing on the rights of local citizens to make decisions about local matters—the principle of home rule.

I would have signed this legislation, but the House attached to it highly objectionable legislation that would have failed to fund important priorities in education, health, and other areas and would have resulted in an across-the-board cut in funding for important programs from defense and veterans' programs to education, law enforcement, and the environment.

Unfortunately, the House voted today on a replacement DC bill that runs contrary to the earlier bipartisan agreement and undercuts the progress that has been made for the benefit of the people of the District of Columbia. The consensus bill on the District passed by both Houses remains acceptable to me, and I would sign it if it were presented as a stand-alone bill or unattached to objectionable legislation. I urge Congress to act for the benefit of the citizens of the District and our Nation's Capital by sending me the agreed-upon legislation, unencumbered by objectionable legislation or provisions.

Statement on the Verdict in the Matthew Shepard Murder Trial

November 3, 1999

Today's verdict closes a chapter in the tragic story of the killing of Matthew Shepard. Although the verdict cannot bring Matthew back, perhaps it will bring some sense of closure to Dennis and Judy Shepard, as well as other family and friends of Matthew. The First Lady and I offer our prayers for them and our hope that their memories of Matthew's life will sustain them in the difficult time ahead.

The verdict is a dramatic statement that we are determined to have a tolerant, law-abiding nation that celebrates our differences rather than despising them. Our Nation must unite in outrage against hate-based violence. We cannot surrender to those on the fringe of our society who lash out at those who are different. Their crimes impose a particular