

Statement on Signing the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992 November 4, 1992

Today I am signing into law H.R. 5193, the "Veterans Health Care Act of 1992." This legislation will improve the delivery of health care and other services to our Nation's veterans.

H.R. 5193 implements the Administration's proposal to establish the Persian Gulf War Veterans Health Registry within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This registry is a reflection of our Nation's commitment to the men and women who served in the Persian Gulf War. Iraqi troops retreating from Kuwait maliciously set fire to many Kuwaiti oil wells, blanketing the region in thick black smoke. In the aftermath of the war, many veterans exposed to those oil fire pollutants and other environmental hazards in the area expressed concern for their health. This provision will enable VA to learn more about, and deal effectively with, potential health problems by providing a complete physical examination to any Persian Gulf veteran who requests it. The results of the examinations will be maintained in the registry and will be available if needed for scientific research.

H.R. 5193 also authorizes VA to provide counseling services to women who suffer the trauma of being sexually assaulted or harassed during their military service. Sexual harassment of women in any setting is abhorrent. We must continue working to make certain that such behavior does not occur. Nevertheless, when it does occur, we must be prepared to assist the victims. H.R. 5193 will do exactly that.

A number of other provisions to improve services to veterans are included in this bill.

For example, H.R. 5193 implements an Administration proposal to provide a permanent authorization for VA's State home construction program. Through this VA-State partnership, VA helps with the construction and renovation of veterans homes operated by the States. Over the years, these facilities have provided much needed nursing home and domiciliary care to thousands of disabled and elderly veterans. The bill also extends VA's successful respite care program, under which disabled veterans living at home are hospitalized for short periods to give family caregivers a period of "respite." In addition, H.R. 5193 continues a VA scholarship program, used primarily for nurses, which pays for a student's education in exchange for service at VA medical facilities.

I have previously warned of the enormous and extremely costly burden imposed by various congressional reporting requirements. Notwithstanding these concerns, H.R. 5193 includes no less than 12 separate provisions requiring the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit reports to the Congress. I must again object to such costly requirements and call on the Congress to end the incessant imposition of onerous reporting requirements.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
November 4, 1992.

Note: H.R. 5193, approved November 4, was assigned Public Law No. 102-585.

Statement on Signing the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 1993

November 4, 1992

Today I am signing into law H.R. 6135, the "National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act, Fiscal Year

1993." Our civil space program is a major contributor to this Nation's status as a world leader. H.R. 6135 authorizes the continu-