

tionable. These provisions include those that would have adversely affected the Shenandoah National Park and Richmond Battlefield National Park in Virginia, the Sequoia National Park in California, the Tongass National Forest, and other national parks and Federal lands.

To be sure, this is not a perfect bill. I continue to have concerns about certain provisions.

But on the whole, it represents a vast and good-faith improvement over the earlier conference agreement. Again, I applaud the House for approving this legislation last night, and I hope the Senate will do the same before it adjourns for the year.

Statement on Welfare Reform Initiatives

September 30, 1996

Today I am pleased to announce two important steps my administration is taking to continue our progress in making work and responsibility the law of the land.

First, today we have given the green light to the first two States to submit their State plans under the new law—Wisconsin and Michigan. Both States will receive funding under the new welfare block grant for FY 1997 as well as part of FY 1996, and will now come under all the requirements of the new welfare law, including the work requirements and the 5-year lifetime limit on welfare receipt. Both States no longer need an AFDC waiver to carry out their welfare reform plans.

I am especially pleased by this action, because as I have said before, Wisconsin's plan to replace the broken AFDC system with a system based on work is one of the boldest, most revolutionary welfare reform plans in the country. I am delighted to see it move forward. Michigan is also embarking on an innovative plan to reward and require work and demand responsibility. I congratulate both States for recognizing

what all Americans agree on: Welfare reform is first and foremost about work.

Second, tomorrow we will release the first allotment of child care funds to the States. I fought hard for the increased child care funding in the new law, because I believe that child care is essential to move people from welfare to work. Under the provisions we fought for, funding in the new child care block grant for States will increase this year from \$1.3 billion to \$1.9 billion. That means States will receive \$600 million more for child care this year than they would have received without the new law.

These steps build on the progress we have already made over the last 4 years to reform welfare and crack down on child support enforcement. Since I took office, the welfare rolls have dropped by 1.9 million; child support collections have increased by nearly 50 percent to a record \$11.8 billion; and last year's decline in the number of Americans in poverty was the largest one-year drop in 27 years. I am determined to keep working to make sure these trends continue moving in the right direction.

Statement on Signing the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1997

September 30, 1996

Today I have signed into law H.R. 3675, the "Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1997."

The Act provides \$35.5 billion in funding for the Department of Transportation and several smaller agencies, including the National Trans-

portation Safety Board. The bill is consistent with my request in most key areas.

I am pleased that the Congress fully funded my request for the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) safety programs. This bill, together with the FY 1997 omnibus appropriations bill