

June 19 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

president of the mayors group. It's been an experience, and we appreciate all of your efforts this past year. And you've outlined a number of things that we need to continue to work with in the future, and we plan to do that with you, too.

So again, thank you very much. We thank you or all of your efforts and for your staff members and Cabinet officers that are here, too. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Clinton. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you all, and I'll turn it over to Secretary Cuomo and the rest of our crowd. Have a great meeting.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 5:20 p.m. from Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building to the meeting in Reno, NV. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Paul Helmke of Fort Wayne, IN, president, Mayor Deedee Corradini of Salt Lake City, UT, president-elect, and J. Thomas Cochran, executive director, U.S. Conference of Mayors; Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver, CO; Mayor Jerry E. Abramson of Louisville, KY; and David Osborne, president, Public Strategies Group, Inc.

Statement on Internal Revenue Service Reform Legislation

June 19, 1998

I am very pleased that our efforts to reform the IRS took a major step forward today with a bipartisan agreement reconciling the House and Senate legislation. I have worked very hard to give the American people an IRS that is fairer and more responsive to their needs. Enactment of this compromise reform will build on our initiative to give Americans a modern, customer-friendly IRS.

Our new IRS Commissioner, Charles Rossotti, has brought forceful leadership and the best management techniques from the private sector to the agency. This bipartisan compromise will give him the tools he needs to succeed, while expanding taxpayer rights. It will allow the IRS to bring in talent and expertise from the private sector, strengthen the Taxpayer Advocate's office, and expand the convenient and popular practice of filing tax returns electronically and over the phone. We are pleased that Congress incorporated the Commissioner's sweeping reor-

ganization of the IRS along customer service lines and addressed our concerns about earlier versions of this reform by correcting provisions that would have inadvertently allowed non-compliant taxpayers to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. The Congress also made sure that the Treasury Secretary and the IRS Commissioner will serve on the board overseeing the IRS.

Under the leadership of the Vice President and Secretary Rubin, we have made great strides in our efforts to revamp customer service at the IRS. We have expanded phone and office hours, created popular new problem-solving days, and launched independent citizen advocacy panels. We cannot solve every problem at the IRS at once, but we are committed to correcting problems when they arise, and this bill will help us do that. I urge Congress to send me this compromise legislation quickly, but to make sure that it is fully and properly funded.

Statement on Signing the Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act

June 19, 1998

I was very pleased to sign today S. 1244, the Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act. This bill protects the religious

and charitable contributions made by people who later declare bankruptcy.

As Americans, we value the important role religious and charitable institutions play in the daily life of this Nation. Indeed, we know that fiscal responsibility for these institutions is fundamental to their efforts to meet the spiritual, social and other concerns of our Nation. It is a great loss to all of our citizens for creditors to recoup their losses in bankruptcy cases from donations made in good faith by our citizens to their churches and charitable institutions.

As Americans we also know that giving, whether to one's church, temple, mosque, or other house of worship or to any charitable organization, fosters and enriches our sense of community. We need to encourage, not discourage, that sense of community. The Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act does just that.

NOTE: S. 1244, approved June 19, was assigned Public Law No. 105-183.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Estonia-United States Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty With Documentation *June 19, 1998*

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Estonia on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Washington on April 2, 1998. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties being negotiated by the United States in order to counter criminal activity more effectively. The Treaty should be an effective tool to assist in the prosecution of a wide variety of crimes, including "white-collar" crime and drug-trafficking offenses. The Treaty is self-executing.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Mutual assistance available under the Treaty includes: taking the testimony or statements of persons; providing documents, records, and articles of evidence; locating or identifying persons or items; serving documents; transferring persons in custody for testimony or other purposes; executing requests for searches and seizures; assisting in proceedings related to immobilization and forfeiture of assets, restitution, and collection of fines; and rendering any other form of assistance not prohibited by the laws of the Requested State.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 19, 1998.

Interview With CBS News, Cox Newspapers, and McClatchy Newspapers *June 19, 1998*

President's Trip to China

Q. We've been talking among ourselves, so we'll just jump right into it. Just real quickly, one poll question. In a CBS/New York Times poll, some data that we put together shows that 59 percent of the American public believes you

should go on this trip. But 35 percent say they—only 35 say they approve of your policy toward China. What do you hope to accomplish on this trip to pull that 35 closer to the 59 or higher?

The President. Well, I think one of the things I hope to accomplish is I hope that as a result of the trip, the American people will learn more