

July 22 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

Statement on Senate Armed Services Committee Action on the Nomination of Daryl Jones To Be Secretary of the Air Force

July 22, 1998

I am deeply disappointed that the Senate Armed Services Committee declined to send to the full Senate the nomination of Daryl Jones to be Secretary of the Air Force. Mr. Jones has a distinguished record of public service in Florida and a strong commitment to the Air Force. I know him to be a good, decent, able man. He was an outstanding candidate for this

position, and he deserved the opportunity to be considered by the full Senate. I appreciate the support he received from Chairman Thurmond, Senator Levin, and many other Senators in both parties. I thank Mr. Jones for his willingness to serve his country. I am confident that he will continue to make vital contributions to Florida and to our Nation.

Remarks Announcing the White House Press Secretary Transition and an Exchange With Reporters

July 23, 1998

The President. I have not become the White House Press Secretary, yet. [Laughter] I have two announcements to make today; one involves the gentlemen on my—plural—right and left.

Heat Wave

But first, I'd like to make an announcement about the heat wave. All Americans have been deeply concerned and troubled by the human toll of the record heat wave that has spread across many parts of the United States. Already this summer in many Southern and Southwestern States, temperatures have been 20 percent higher than normal. This scorching heat shows no signs of abating. It has destroyed crops, led to widespread power outages, and worst of all, has resulted in the deaths of over 100 people. The most vulnerable—the very old, the very young, people with disabilities—are at greatest risk. Those who cannot afford air-conditioning are at real peril of further health risks as the heat wave goes on.

In times of human crisis we have an obligation to act, to strengthen the ties that bind us as one nation. When fire or flood or earthquakes strike, we step in. When blizzards and high energy costs put elderly and poor citizens at risk, we step in. When smothering heat threatens the lives of people, we can step in, and that is what I am doing today.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, makes funds available for

emergency use to help at-risk families in times of weather distress. Today I am directing the Department of Health and Human Services to release \$100 million in emergency funds for the 11 hottest Southern and Western States, to help families pay for air-conditioners, fans, electric bills, and other ways to beat the heat.

This emergency relief was paid for in the bipartisan balanced budget agreement reached with Congress last year. It reflects the long-standing commitment by both parties to help citizens protect their families in severe weather conditions.

It is, I might say, in light of these terrible weather conditions—and I would point out, I believe—I saw one television program yesterday that pointed out that the 9 hottest years on record have occurred in the last 11 years; that 1997 was the hottest year on record; that in each and every month in 1998, it has beaten the previous record month. So this will be the hottest year on record if something doesn't happen.

Therefore, it is all the more disturbing that Republican leaders in the House of Representatives are attempting to entirely eliminate the LIHEAP program. If Congress proceeds to try and eliminate all funding for this vital emergency assistance, it would be an act of political irresponsibility. It would put partisanship ahead of the progress and the people of our country.