

Oct. 28 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

Statement on Signing the Noncitizen Benefit Clarification and Other Technical Amendments Act of 1998

October 28, 1998

Today I have signed into law H.R. 4558, the “Noncitizen Benefit Clarification and Other Technical Amendments Act of 1998.” This legislation will further the efforts that I have undertaken to reverse unduly harsh benefit restrictions on legal immigrants that have nothing to do with moving people from welfare to work. H.R. 4558 will ensure that thousands of elderly and disabled legal immigrants who are dependent on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid will continue to receive such benefits.

The Act also contains several warranted technical amendments. Most significantly, H.R. 4558 will clarify that (i) eligible children with life-threatening conditions may continue to receive

limited cash awards from tax-exempt organizations without losing SSI benefits, and (ii) will amend implementation time-frames for certain Welfare-to-Work funds.

I applaud the bipartisan spirit of H.R. 4558 and am pleased to sign this important legislation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 28, 1998.

NOTE: H.R. 4558, approved October 28, was assigned Public Law No. 105–306. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Statement on Emergency Funding for Antidrug Activities

October 28, 1998

I am making an additional \$732 million in emergency funding available to support antidrug activities and drug interdiction. These funds were provided in the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999, which I signed into law on Wednesday, October 21st.

Of the total amount I am making available, funds are distributed as follows:

- Department of Agriculture: \$23,000,000
- Department of Defense: \$42,000,000
- Department of Justice: \$20,200,000

- Department of State: \$232,600,000
- Department of Transportation: \$133,700,000
- Department of the Treasury: \$277,500,000
- Office of National Drug Control Policy: \$1,200,000
- Federal Drug Control Programs: \$2,000,000

NOTE: H.R. 4328, the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999, was assigned Public Law No. 105–277.

Remarks at the State Dinner Honoring President Andres Pastrana of Colombia

October 28, 1998

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. Mr. President, Mrs. Pastrana, members of the Colombian delegation, distinguished guests, it’s a great pleasure to welcome all of you to the

White House for this dinner in honor of the President and the First Lady of Colombia.

Today President Pastrana and I worked hard to advance the partnership between Colombia

and the United States. Tonight we celebrate our friendship, among friends. It is a long friendship, indeed, going back to our struggles for independence, including, as President Pastrana discussed today, an alliance in war as well as peace.

After all these years, the United States remains captivated by Colombia, by the power of Colombian art, the force of Colombian literature, and I might add, the strength of Colombian coffee. [Laughter] Indeed, if ever a prize is given to any of the people who negotiated the peace treaty at Wye, something will have to be given to Colombia, for without the coffee it would not have occurred. [Laughter]

The United States is grateful for the many contributions Colombians make to our national life, as students, teachers, athletes, and every occupation between.

Mr. President, your election this summer marks the beginning of a new era in your country's history and in our long relationship. Bravely, you have placed Colombia on the path to peace. You have taken hard steps toward renewed prosperity. We look forward to walking with you into the 21st century. We still have much to learn from and to give to each other.

We live in a hemisphere on a planet growing ever smaller. In our independence, every day we grow more interdependent. If we would be strong, we must lift others. If we would fulfill our own promise, we must help others live their dreams. We must, in short, go forward together.

In the last phrase of what has famously become known in the United States as my favorite novel, "One Hundred Years of Solitude," our guest and friend tonight, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, says, "Races condemned to 100 years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on Earth." In the 21st century let us move away from isolation, solitude, loneliness, to build 100 years of an American family together.

Ladies and gentlemen, I ask you to join me in a toast to the President and First Lady of Colombia and to the people of their great land.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:50 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Nohra Pastrana, wife of President Pastrana. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Pastrana.

Interview With Walter Cronkite and Miles O'Brien of the Cable News Network in Cape Canaveral, Florida October 29, 1998

John Glenn's Return to Space

Walter Cronkite. Good to see you, Mr. President.

The President. Good morning, Walter, and good morning, Miles—or good afternoon. I'm delighted to be here.

Mr. Cronkite. They say, Mr. President, that there are more visitors here than at any time since the Moon launchings, the Moon flights, and that includes the President of the United States. What's particularly appealing to you about this flight?

The President. Well, of course there is the John Glenn factor. Senator Glenn is a very good personal friend of Hillary's and mine, as well as an ally, a colleague. And like all Americans, I'm thrilled that he is going up today. But also this really is the last launch before we begin to put the international space station up. So

John Glenn began this first phase of our space program, and he's ending it just before we start on the space station.

So it's very exciting. It's important for the space program. But it's a great day for America, a great day for our senior citizens, and I hope that all Americans share the exuberance that I feel today.

Mr. Cronkite. You know, some naysayers say, Mr. President, that this flight of Glenn's is your reward to him for his stalwart support of you during his years in the Senate. Anything to that?

The President. No. I've always wanted John to be able to go back, as long as I've known he's wanted to. But if I had my druthers, he'd be home in Ohio running for reelection right now. [Laughter] And he said he was too old to serve another term in the Senate, but he wasn't too old to go into space.