

example, this bill bars the District from spending its own funds to seek voting rights for the citizens of the District of Columbia. Congress should not impose such conditions on the District of Columbia. And it is wrong for some in Congress to threaten to cut funding that

would fight crime, expand educational opportunity by providing tuition assistance, and improve children's health simply because they are unwilling to let the people of the District of Columbia make local decisions about local matters, as they should under home rule.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval Appropriations Legislation for the District of Columbia September 28, 1999

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval, H.R. 2587, the "District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 2000." Although the bill provides important funding for the District of Columbia, I am vetoing this bill because it includes a number of highly objectionable provisions that are unwarranted intrusions into local citizens' decisions about local matters.

I commend the Congress for developing a bill that includes requested funding for the District of Columbia. The bill includes essential funding for District Courts and Corrections and the D.C. Offender Supervision Agency and goes a long way toward providing requested funds for a new tuition assistance program for District of Columbia residents. I appreciate the additional funding included in the bill to promote the adoption of children in the District's foster care system, to support the Children's National Medical Center, to assist the Metropolitan Police Department in eliminating open-air drug trafficking in the District, and for drug testing and treatment, among other programs.

However, I am disappointed that the Congress has added to the bill a number of highly objectionable provisions that would interfere with local decisions about local matters. Were it not for these provisions, I would sign the bill into law. Many of the Members who voted for this legislation represent States and localities that do not impose similar restrictions on their own citizens. I urge the Congress to remove the following provisions expeditiously to prevent the interruption of important funding for the District of Columbia:

- *Voting Representation.* H.R. 2587 would prohibit not only the use of Federal, but also District funds to provide assistance for

petition drives or civil action that seek to obtain voting representation in the Congress for residents of the District of Columbia.

- *Limit on Access to Representation in Special Education Cases.* The bill would cap the award of plaintiffs' attorneys' fees in cases brought by parents of District schoolchildren against the District of Columbia Public Schools under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In the long run, this provision would likely limit the access of the District's poor families to quality legal representation, thus impairing their due process protections provided by the IDEA.
- *Abortion.* The bill would prohibit the use of not only Federal, but also District funds to pay for abortions except in those cases where the life of the mother is endangered or in situations involving rape or incest.
- *Domestic Partners Act.* The bill would prohibit the use of not only Federal, but also District funds to implement or enforce the Health Care Benefits Expansion Act of 1992.
- *Needle Exchange Programs.* The bill contains a ban that would seriously disrupt current AIDS/HIV prevention efforts by prohibiting the use of Federal and local funds for needle exchange programs. H.R. 2587 denies not only Federal, but also District funding to any public or private agency, including providers of HIV/AIDS-related services, in the District of Columbia that uses the public or private agency's own funds for needle exchange programs, undermining the principle of home rule in the District.

- *Controlled Substances.* The bill would prohibit the District from legislating with respect to certain controlled substances, in a manner that all States are free to do.
- *Restriction on City Council Salaries.* The bill would limit the amount of salary that can be paid to members of the District of Columbia Council.

I urge the Congress to send me a bill that maintains the important funding for the District

provided in this bill and that eliminates these highly objectionable provisions as well as other provisions that undermine the ability of residents of the District of Columbia to make decisions about local matters.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 28, 1999.

Remarks on Presenting the Arts and Humanities Awards September 29, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you so much, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome. I want to welcome all of our honorees here: Bill Ivey and all the people from the National Endowment for the Humanities; Bill Ferris and all the people from the National Endowment for the Arts; the people from Library and Museum Services; Members of Congress. I have seen Senator Wellstone and Congressman Houghton, Representative Morella and Nadler. There may be others here.

I want to thank the people of our shared homeland, the Irish band and the step dancers, for doing such a wonderful job today. I thought they were great. If George Mitchell doesn't get us over the final hump in the last steps of the Irish peace process, I may just send them back until everybody—[laughter]—is smiling so much they can't think of anything other than ending the conflict.

I'd also like to thank the wonderful strings from the Marine Corps for doing such a great job for us here today.

In one of his final speeches, President Kennedy said he looked forward to an America which rewards achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business; an America which commands respect throughout the world not only for its strength but for its civilization. Today we recognize an extraordinary group of Americans who have strengthened our civilization and whose achievements have enriched our lives through the songs they sing, the stories they tell, the books they write, the art they shape, the gifts they share.

Eighteen women and men, one educational institution, all having defined in their own unique ways a part of who we are as a people and what we're about as a nation as we enter a new century in a new millennium.

First I present the National Medal of the Arts winners.

Irene Diamond, one of America's leading patrons of the arts, has dedicated her life to discovery. As an early Hollywood talent scout, she discovered Burt Lancaster and Robert Redford. For that alone, some people think she should get this award. [Laughter]

As one of the movie industry's first female story editors, she discovered the script that became "Casablanca." I believe when the film industry issued its list of 100 greatest films, "Casablanca" only ranked second, Irene, but some of us voted for it number one. [Laughter]

As the president of the Aaron Diamond Foundation, she helped fuel the pathbreaking research that led to the discovery of protease inhibitors, which are now helping people with HIV lead longer and healthier lives. As a generous supporter of the arts, she has given more than \$70 million to help more Americans discover the magic of theater, dance, and song.

It has been said that discovery consists of seeing what everyone has seen and thinking what no one has thought. We are all far richer for the vision, the insight, and the discoveries of this most precious Diamond.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lt. Col. Carlton D. Everhart, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President, read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]