

to meet their capital requirements than are larger airports.

NOTE: S. 1637, approved September 29, was assigned Public Law No. 106–59.

Statement on Signing the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2000 *September 29, 1999*

Today I signed H.R. 2490, “Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2000”, a bill that contains several important improvements in family planning and child care. This bipartisan bill will give people who work for the Federal Government access to more affordable child care and flexibility in family planning. It will require health plans participating in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) that provide prescription drug coverage to provide prescription contraceptive cov-

erage as well, while providing an exception for plans that object to this requirement on religious grounds. The bill also gives Government agencies new flexibility that will allow them to make child care more affordable for lower income Federal employees. While this bill is not perfect, it does show that we can make progress when we work in a bipartisan fashion.

NOTE: H.R. 2490, approved September 29, was assigned Public Law No. 106–58.

Statement on Signing the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2000 *September 29, 1999*

I have signed into law today H.R. 2490, the “Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2000,” which provides \$13.7 billion in discretionary budget authority for programs in the Department of the Treasury, the United States Postal Service, the General Services Administration, the Office of Personnel Management, the Executive Office of the President, and several smaller agencies. I commend the Congress for producing a bipartisan bill that allows us to continue the IRS reform effort and the national youth anti-drug media campaign and to fund important law enforcement efforts and other programs.

The bill provides \$12.4 billion for the Department of the Treasury, including \$132 million for violent crime reduction programs. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is funded at \$8.2 billion. I believe that these funds will strengthen the IRS’s ability to provide timely and accurate data for American taxpayers. The bill also includes \$144 million for the Earned Income Tax Credit compliance initiative and \$250 million for Year 2000 conversion requirements for IRS

computer systems. Law enforcement bureaus within the Department of the Treasury are funded at \$3.4 billion. I am pleased that the Congress has fully funded my request for the expansion of the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative.

The bill provides \$185 million for the Office of National Drug Control Policy’s (ONDCP) national youth anti-drug media campaign. This money will enable ONDCP’s national media campaign to continue its effort to change youth attitudes about drug use and its consequences. The campaign is a model public-private partnership, exposing 90 percent of all 9- to 17-year-olds to anti-drug messages at least four times a week.

I am pleased that the enrolled bill requires health plans participating in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program that provide prescription drug coverage to provide prescription contraceptive coverage as well. I am also pleased that the enrolled bill allows agencies to use appropriated funds to support day care centers at Federal facilities. This provision

should improve the affordability of child care for lower-income Federal employees.

Several provisions in the Act purport to condition my authority or that of certain officers to use funds appropriated by the Act on the approval of congressional committees. My Administration will interpret such provisions to require notification only, since any other interpretation would contradict the Supreme Court's ruling in *INS v. Chadha*.

Section 622 of the Treasury/General Government Appropriations Act prohibits the use of appropriations to pay the salary of any employee who interferes with certain communications between Federal employees and Members of Congress. I do not interpret this provision to detract

from my constitutional authority and that of my appointed heads of departments to supervise and control the operations and communications of the executive branch, including the control of privileged and national security information.

I urge the Congress to complete action on the remaining FY 2000 appropriations bills as quickly as possible and send them to me in an acceptable form.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 29, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2490, approved September 29, was assigned Public Law No. 106–58.

Remarks at the Arts and Humanities Awards Dinner September 29, 1999

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the White House. A special welcome to all of our honorees of the National Medals of Arts and Humanities. The nice thing about this evening, apart from being here in America's house slightly before we celebrate its 200th birthday, is that there are no speeches and lots of entertainment—[*laughter*—unless, of course, Mr. Keillor wants to substitute for me at this moment. [*Laughter*] I'll be living down that crack I made about him for the rest of my life. [*Laughter*]

I want to say again, as I did today and as Hillary did, that this is one of the most enjoyable and important days of every year to us, because it gives America a chance to recognize our sons and daughters who have enriched our lives, made us laugh, made us think, made us cry, lifted us up when we were down. In so many ways, all of you have touched so many people that you will never know. But in all of

them accumulated, you have made America a better place; you've made the world a finer place.

And as we look to the new century, I hope that as time goes on we will be known more and more for things beyond our wealth and power, that go to the wealth and power of our spirit. Insofar as that happens, it will be because of you and people like you. And it was a privilege for all of us to honor you today.

I would like to ask all of you here to join me in a toast to the 1999 winners of the Medal of Arts and the Medal of Humanities.

[*At this point, the participants drank a toast.*]

The President. And welcome. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to National Humanities Medal recipient humorist Garrison Keillor.