

that still, small voice that spoke to those six good men, that moved their souls to service and sacrifice. The still, small voice that endures through the ages, that inspires the songs and words we have all shared today, that must now carry this group of grieving families through their grief to going on.

Today we thank God for the lives our fallen firefighters lived. We hope their families can remember the good and happy times and bring some smiles through their tears. We commend their souls to God's eternal loving care, and we pray that His still, small voice will bring strength and healing to these families and to

this wonderful community who loved them so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. at Worcester's Centrum Centre. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Raymond V. Mariano of Worcester; Gov. Argeo Paul Cellucci of Massachusetts; Bishop of Worcester Daniel P. Reilly; Dennis L. Budd, chief, Worcester Fire Department; Frank Raffa, president, Worcester Fire Fighters Local 1009; and Alfred K. Whitehead, general president, International Association of Fire Fighters.

Statement on Renewed Flooding in Vietnam

December 9, 1999

I was saddened to learn of renewed flooding in the central provinces of Vietnam, which were already inundated by heavy rains last month. On behalf of the American people, I extend my deepest sympathies to all those who have suffered losses and are struggling to rebuild, including the families of many Americans of Vietnamese descent.

The United States is providing emergency assistance to support flood relief efforts, just as we provided almost \$600,000 in November to deliver supplies and build flood-resistant homes. We stand ready to provide further help to meet the urgent needs of those affected by the flooding and to help the Vietnamese people better withstand future flooding.

Statement on Signing Chattahoochee River Protection Legislation

December 9, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2140, a bill that will enhance the protection of a 48-mile segment of the Chattahoochee River, a vital natural resource for the Atlanta metropolitan area and an important unit of the National Park System. This legislation ensures that the natural, scenic, recreational, and historic values of one of our Nation's great urban rivers will be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

This Act provides the foundation for a cooperative effort by the Federal Government, the State of Georgia, local governments, and private entities to link the separate units of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area through purchases of remaining open space along the Chattahoochee River corridor north of Atlanta. It gives the National Park Service

the authority to expand the land base of the recreation area from approximately 6,800 acres to 10,000 acres through a revision of the boundary, by adding undeveloped land within the 2,000-foot river bank corridors. The National Park Service also will be authorized to exclude some properties currently within the boundary that are no longer suitable for the park because they have been developed.

From the time the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area was established in 1978, the pace of residential and commercial development in the Chattahoochee River corridor has accelerated rapidly. A U.S. Census Bureau report issued earlier this year names Forsyth County, Georgia, where the recreation area boundary begins, the fastest-growing county in

the Nation. The three other counties in which the recreation area lies are also experiencing a surge in growth. This Act will enable the National Park Service to spend funds that were appropriated in the 105th Congress, as well as funds that have been or will be contributed by State and local governments and private interests, to acquire the remaining open space in the Chattahoochee River corridor before those properties are developed for residential and commercial purposes.

The Act is strongly supported on a bipartisan basis by Georgia's congressional representatives, Georgia State and local government officials, the National Park Service, and private organizations,

including the Trust for Public Land, which has played a key role in bringing together the various interests involved and developing a vision for the future of this critical area. It is with great respect and gratitude for those who made this legislation possible that I sign H.R. 2140 today.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
December 9, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2140, approved December 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-154.

Statement on Signing Legislation To Establish Federal Criminal Penalties for Commerce in Depiction of Animal Cruelty *December 9, 1999*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1887, a bill that would establish Federal criminal penalties for the "creation, sale, or possession" of "a depiction of animal cruelty" with the intent to distribute such a depiction in interstate or foreign commerce, except when the depiction has "serious religious, political, scientific, educational, journalistic, historical, or artistic value."

I strongly support the objectives of this legislation. Its enactment should assist in reducing or eliminating some of the deplorable and indefensible practices that were identified during the Congress's deliberations on the bill and described in the House Judiciary Committee report on the bill.

Concerns were raised, however, during congressional consideration of H.R. 1887 that its application in certain contexts may violate the First Amendment of the Constitution. It is im-

portant to avoid constitutional challenge to this legislation and to ensure that the Act does not chill protected speech. Accordingly, I will broadly construe the Act's exception and will interpret it to require a determination of the value of the depiction as part of a work or communication, taken as a whole. So construed, the Act would prohibit the types of depictions, described in the statute's legislative history, of wanton cruelty to animals designed to appeal to a prurient interest in sex. I will direct the Department of Justice to enforce the Act accordingly.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
December 9, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1887, approved December 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-152.

Statement on Signing the U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Extension Act of 1999 *December 9, 1999*

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 2401, the "U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Extension Act of 1999." This legislation, which

extends the mandate of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States for 1 year, is a clear demonstration of