

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