

June 30 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Judge Wynn the Senate votes that they so richly deserve.

We cannot afford to allow political considerations to empty our courts and put justice on hold. I have worked very hard to avoid contentious ideological fights over nominees. I have worked hard to put forward good, qualified candidates who reflect the diversity of our Nation. The judges I have nominated during my tenure as President are the most diverse group in history. They have also garnered, as a group, the

highest American Bar Association ratings of any President's nominees in nearly 40 years. They have shattered the myth that diversity and quality do not go hand in hand. But despite the high qualifications of my nominees, there is a mounting vacancy crisis in our courts. Too often, we are creating situations in which justice delayed means justice denied. And ultimately, if we fail to make our courts reflect America, we risk an America where there may be less respect for the decisions of our courts.

Statement on Funding To Hire Highly Qualified Teachers

June 30, 2000

Today Secretary Riley announced the award of \$1.3 billion to continue on the path to hiring 100,000 new, highly qualified teachers as part of my class size reduction program. These funds will allow States to place more high-quality teachers in smaller classes in the early grades, so that approximately 1.7 million children can receive the personal and academic support they need. The Vice President and I have a long-standing commitment to ensure that all children have access to a first-class education, and these grants provide support to State and local communities to work toward this goal by investing in what works. Unfortunately, Republicans in

Congress are rejecting this proven strategy of investing in what works and insisting on accountability for results, in favor of unfocused block grants with little or no accountability. I urge Congress to reverse its recent actions and enact full funding to reduce class sizes in the early grades, strengthen accountability and turn around failing schools, expand before-school and after-school opportunities, assist low-income students in preparing for college, help bridge the digital divide, improve teacher quality, and expand English language/civics education programs for adults.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Taliban

June 30, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the

Taliban is to continue in effect beyond July 5, 2000.

On July 4, 1999, I issued Executive Order 13129, "Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions with the Taliban," to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the actions and policies of the Taliban in Afghanistan. The order blocks all property and interests in property of the Taliban and prohibits trade-related transactions by United States persons involving the territory of Afghanistan controlled by the Taliban.

The Taliban continues to allow territory under its control in Afghanistan to be used as a safe haven and base of operations for Usama bin Laden and the Al-Qaida organization, who have committed and threaten to continue to commit acts of violence against the United States and its nationals. This situation continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in

force these emergency authorities beyond July 5, 2000.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Internet Address

July 1, 2000

Good afternoon. Two hundred and thirteen years ago, about a hundred feet from where I'm sitting now, in a summer as sweltering as this one, the Founding Fathers drafted the Constitution of the United States. In the very first article of that doctrine, they wrote that Government shall make no law, quote, "impairing the obligation of contracts."

James Madison called this contract clause "a constitutional bulwark in favor of personal security and private rights." He and his fellow framers understood that the right of individuals to enter into commercial contracts was fundamental not just for economic growth but for the preservation of liberty itself.

Yesterday I had the privilege of signing into law legislation that carries the spirit of the Founders' wisdom into the information age. The Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act, which passed with overwhelming support from both parties in both Houses, will open up new frontiers of economic opportunity while protecting the rights of America's consumers.

This new law will give fresh momentum to what is already the longest economic expansion in our history, an expansion driven largely by the phenomenal growth in information technologies, particularly the Internet with its almost unlimited potential to expand our opportunities and broaden our horizons.

Yet that potential is now being held back, ironically, by old laws written to protect the sanctity of contracts, laws that require pen and

ink signatures on paper documents for contracts to be enforceable.

Under this landmark new legislation, on-line contracts will now have the same legal force as equivalent paper ones. Companies will have the legal certainty they need to invest and expand in electronic commerce. They will be able not only to purchase products and services on-line but to contract to do so. And they could potentially save billions of dollars by sending and retaining monthly statements and other records in electronic form. Eventually, vast warehouses of paper will be replaced by servers the size of VCR's.

Customers will soon enjoy a whole new universe of on-line services. With the swipe of a smart card and the click of a mouse, they will be able to finalize mortgages, sign insurance contracts, or open brokerage accounts.

Just as importantly, the law affords consumers who contract on-line the same kinds of protections and records—such as financial disclosures—they currently receive when they sign paper contracts. Consumers will be able to choose whether to do business and receive records on paper or on-line. They will have the power to decide if they want to receive notices and disclosures electronically. It will not be their responsibility but the company's to ensure that the data sent to a consumer can be read on the consumer's computer. No more E-mail attachments with gibberish inside.

Finally, government agencies will have the authority to enforce the laws, protect the public