

Statement on the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act *July 27, 2000*

It is long past time that we correct several injustices in the immigration system by changing the registry date and amending the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA). People who have been living for many years in the United States and have developed strong ties to their communities deserve the opportunity to normalize their immigration

status. There is no reason for Congress to stand in the way of a reasonable bipartisan bill to increase H-1B visas, invest in our workers, and correct these longstanding injustices. Congress should not pass H-1B or any other immigration legislation this year without ensuring that these injustices are addressed. The American people deserve no less.

Statement on Congressional Action on Republican Tax Cut Legislation *July 27, 2000*

I am disappointed that the Republican Congress continues to strip away our fiscal discipline bill-by-bill by passing another in a series of costly tax cuts that, taken together, will spend our entire hard-earned surplus. This misguided plan leaves nothing for lengthening the life of Social Security and Medicare, nothing for a prescription drug benefit, nothing for education or other priorities, and would make it impossible for us to get America out of debt by 2012. In its latest action, the House passed a bill that does nothing for more than 80 percent of seniors while failing

to act on a Medicare prescription drug benefit which would be available to all Seniors and people with disabilities.

This is the wrong approach. We can maintain our fiscal discipline while providing targeted tax relief to help families pay for college, long-term care, child care, build and modernize schools, and save for retirement. In the interest of fiscal responsibility, I will veto this legislation that threatens our ability to pay down the debt, strengthen Medicare and Social Security, and invest in education.

Statement on the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child *July 27, 2000*

This week I sent to the Senate two historic United Nations protocols that will protect the world's children in unprecedented new ways. Over the past 7 years, I am proud of the work we have done with Congress on a bipartisan basis to stand up for young people and protect the dignity and rights of children around the world. These two protocols will build on that work. One of these agreements prohibits the forcible recruitment of children for use in armed conflict. The other protects children from slavery, prostitution, and pornography. Together, they represent a large step forward in the inter-

national effort to eliminate abuses committed against our children and keep them safe.

Both of these agreements were adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on May 25th, and the United States was among the first nations to sign them. I was pleased to see that both the Senate (on June 7th) and the House of Representatives (on July 11th) expressed their support for the Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. Neither agreement will create obligations for the United States under any international agreement to which we are not a party. I am hopeful that the Senate will act quickly and give its advice

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and consent to both of these agreements by the end of the year.

Statement on Compensation and Benefits for Filipino Veterans

July 27, 2000

Today I am directing the Department of Veterans Affairs to produce a study on the needs of Filipino veterans who served with the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II. I have asked that the study provide specific options on how our Veterans Affairs' health care system can address the needs of these Filipino veterans now living in the United States.

During World War II, Filipino nationals were called into military service by Executive order of the President and fought valiantly under U.S. command to help achieve peace and freedom in the Pacific. After the war, the United States made grants to the Philippine Government to provide for the needs of these veterans. In addition, some are eligible for benefits under the United States veterans system. However, many

of these deserving veterans living in the United States are currently not eligible for such benefits.

For several years, my administration has worked with Members of Congress such as Representatives Bob Filner and Patsy Mink to recognize the contributions of Filipino veterans and to improve the compensation and benefits of those living in the United States. As this population ages, it has a growing need for quality health care. That is why I am asking the Department of Veterans Affairs to look at ways we can address their needs. I look forward to the Department's recommendations. I am eager to find a way to fulfill the needs of this deserving group of veterans.

Memorandum on a Study of Compensation and Benefits for Filipino Veterans

July 27, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of the Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Study of Compensation and Benefits for Filipino Veterans

My Administration has recognized the unique contribution of Filipino veterans of the Second World War and worked to improve their compensation and benefits. In fact, for the last two sessions of Congress we have proposed legislation to eliminate the current dollar limitation for authorized compensation payments to Filipino beneficiaries residing in the United States. The proposed legislation has not been enacted. This reality, coupled with the fact that numerous Filipino veterans have immigrated to this country, suggests that the we need to raise awareness

of the issues and options to help this group of deserving veterans.

To that end, I am directing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to complete a study by October 31, 2000, of the needs of these veterans and the options available for addressing those needs. This study shall be conducted in coordination with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Department of State, and the Department of Defense, and would include a historical background of, and the issues associated with, the benefits afforded to Filipino veterans. It should also take into consideration changes in the Filipino veteran population and review options relative to the benefits afforded these veterans. It also would include the cost implications of options approved by OMB.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON