

Sept. 28 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

## Statement on the Circuit Court Decision on Affirmative Action in Federal Transportation Construction Contracting September 28, 2000

This week in *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Slater*, the tenth circuit upheld the constitutionality of a major affirmative action program dealing with Federal transportation construction contracting. I am very pleased with the court's decision. It strongly affirms what I have consistently stated: Federal affirmative action programs

are still needed to remedy past and present discrimination and can be implemented in a constitutional manner. My administration has worked very hard to mend, but not end, Federal affirmative action programs, and we are gratified that the court has validated our efforts.

## Statement on Progress in Providing Health Insurance Coverage September 28, 2000

New data released today by the Census Bureau show that the number of Americans without health insurance dropped significantly last year—the first such decline in 12 years. The 1.7 million decline in the uninsured—including over 1 million children—is making a real difference in these Americans' lives. It means that they are likely to receive needed medical care, less likely to be hospitalized for avoidable conditions like pneumonia or uncontrolled diabetes, and less likely to rely on an emergency room as their primary source of care. Clearly, access to affordable, high-quality insurance makes a difference.

I am extremely pleased with today's announcement. I believe it validates our health care and economic policies, which have helped the country begin to reverse the unacceptable numbers of uninsured in this country. I am particularly proud that the enactment of the Children's Health Insurance Program and our success in maintaining a strong economy—which led to increases in employer-based coverage—have laid the foundation for this turnaround.

Although I am pleased with today's development, there is much work to be done. The data from this report well document that the States that most aggressively conducted outreach campaigns to eligible populations have been the most successful at enrolling children. We need to encourage States that are not doing as well to accelerate their activities in reaching out to uninsured children. And we need to provide targeted programs to build on our success.

Today I want to once again call on the Congress to pass my bipartisan health care coverage initiative, including the Vice President's proposal to expand coverage to parents, as well as our initiatives that would expand coverage to 55- to 65-year-olds, workers between jobs, employees of small businesses, and legal immigrants. My balanced budget shows that we have the resources to do this while still paying down the debt by 2012. It's long past time that we take the next step towards expanding coverage and making the Nation's uninsured one of our top priorities.

## Statement on the Death of Pierre Trudeau September 28, 2000

I was deeply saddened to learn today of the death of Pierre Trudeau. As Prime Minister for nearly a generation, Pierre Trudeau opened a

dynamic new era in Canadian politics and helped establish Canada's unique imprint on the global stage. I know his passing will be felt

by all Canadians. Hillary joins me in offering the condolences of the American people to his two sons and to the people of Canada.

## Statement on Deferring Deportation of Liberian Refugees *September 28, 2000*

Today I directed the Attorney General and the Immigration and Naturalization Service to defer for one year from September 29 the deportation of certain Liberians who are present in the United States on that date. This action is aimed at promoting stability in Liberia and West Africa. In particular, I am concerned that a decision by our Government to deport Liberians who have enjoyed the protection of our

country for many years could cause the involuntary repatriation of many thousands of Liberian refugees from other nations in West Africa. This would severely burden Liberia and cause instability in Liberia and in the region. I understand that Congress is actively considering a legislative fix for this problem, and I would welcome any solution that would provide relief for Liberians with longstanding ties to the United States.

## Memorandum on Measures Regarding Certain Liberians in the United States *September 28, 2000*

*Memorandum for the Attorney General*

*Subject:* Measures Regarding Certain Liberians in the United States

Over the past 10 years, many Liberians were forced to flee their country due to civil war and widespread violence. From 1991 through 1999, we provided Liberians in the United States with Temporary Protected Status because of these difficulties. Although the civil war in Liberia ended in 1996 and conditions improved such that a further extension of Temporary Protected Status was no longer warranted, the political and economic situation continued to be fragile. On September 27, 1999, based on compelling foreign policy reasons, I directed you to defer enforced departure of certain Liberians in the United States for 1 year from September 29, 1999.

There continue to be compelling foreign policy reasons not to deport these Liberians at this time. In particular, there is a significant risk that such a decision would cause the involuntary repatriation of many thousands of Liberian refugees in West Africa, causing instability in Liberia and the region.

Pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States, I have determined that it is in the foreign policy interest of the United States to defer for 1 year the deportation of any Liberian national who is present in the United States as of September 29, 2000, except for the categories of individuals listed below.

Accordingly, I now direct you to take the necessary steps to implement for these Liberians:

1. deferral of enforced departure from the United States for 1 year from September 29, 2000; and
2. authorization for employment for 1 year from September 29, 2000.

This directive shall not apply to any Liberian national: (1) who is ineligible for Temporary Protected Status for the reasons provided in section 244(c)(2)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act; (2) whose removal you determine is in the interest of the United States; (3) whose presence or activities in the United States the Secretary of State has reasonable grounds to believe would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States;