

be completed September 30th. [Laughter] I'm still not over flying to Egypt and back in 3 days. I'm sorry.

But anyway, you get the point. We're 3 weeks late, and we don't have a budget. Last week I signed another continuing resolution to keep the Government open until Wednesday, but I told the leadership that if we don't make this deadline, we're going to have to go forward on a day-by-day basis because Congress expects us to get the job done.

I must say, this is the most unusual thing I've ever seen. I would have thought that Congress would want to get the job done so they could go home and run for reelection. And I say that not in a negative way. I think that's an honorable part of our system. We need to finish our business here. We need especially to get an education budget that is worthy of our children, that builds on what works, continues to hire 100,000 teachers, helps communities build or modernize schools, expands the after-school programs and college opportunities, and helps to put a qualified, certified teacher in every classroom.

This is Monday morning, and the children are at school. The parents are at work, and Congress comes back tonight to go to work. Today we have celebrated the best of the American political system. Citizens came together, told their stories, overcame obstacles, and after years of fighting, made America a safer, more humane, more decent place. This proves that our system can work. And what we need to do is to bring these values and this kind of effort to the remaining few days of Congress, so that we can together do more things that are worthy of the great people we serve and the great system we're privileged to be a part of.

Thank you very much, and good morning.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Millie Webb, national president, Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Prior to his remarks, the President signed H.R. 4475, the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001, in the Oval Office. H.R. 4475, approved October 23, was assigned Public Law No. 106-346.

Statement on Signing the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 *October 23, 2000*

I am pleased to sign into law today H.R. 4475, the "Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001." The Act provides over \$58 billion in funding for the Nation's vital transportation safety and infrastructure investment needs. The transportation safety improvements contained in this legislation will save lives on our highways and other transportation systems, and the record level of infrastructure investment will help improve the conditions and performance of the Nation's transportation system in support of a strong economy.

The legislation provides critical transportation safety funding and also contains related legislative provisions. Of particular importance is a provision that will help set a national impaired driving standard at 0.08 Blood Alcohol Content and thus reduce drunk driving on our Nation's

roads. As I have previously said, this is a reasonable, commonsense standard that could save 500 lives a year, while still permitting adults to drink responsibly and moderately. I wish to commend Senators Lautenberg and Shelby, Congressman Wolf, and Congresswoman Lowey for their bipartisan efforts in seeking inclusion of this provision. The legislation also includes a compromise measure that will enable the Department of Transportation to proceed with all stages of rule-making, short of a final rule, on "hours of service" concerning the amount of time drivers of large interstate trucks and buses can spend behind the wheel. It also permits the Department to move forward with its proposal for rollover ratings on cars and light trucks while the National Academy of Sciences studies this issue. In addition, the legislation contains funding increases requested by my Administration for

motor carrier safety, pipeline safety, and the automotive defect investigation program.

I am pleased that H.R. 4475 provides the funding levels required by the Federal Aviation Administration and the Coast Guard. I am particularly pleased with increased funding for modernization of our aviation system envisioned in the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century.

I am disturbed by the provision of H.R. 4475 that blocks the Department of Transportation from evaluating the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards. Recent data indicate that motor vehicle fuel economy efficiency has declined. I believe that the Department should be allowed to analyze this issue, and I expect the Department to work with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out the CAFE study authorized by the bill to develop workable approaches to energy conservation. The Act provides important funding for Job Access grants that will help hard-pressed working families, including former welfare recipients, get to work. I am disappointed, however, that the bill provides \$50 million less than our request for these grants, earmarks 75 percent of the program, and does not include my Administration's proposal to allow Native American tribes to apply directly for this funding.

I am pleased that H.R. 4475 contains \$600 million for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. When added to the \$900 million already appropriated, this will complete the Federal Government's contribution to this bridge. Likewise, I am pleased that the bill includes an additional \$25 million for Indian Reservation Roads.

Our transportation investment must continue to be intermodal and applied to critical needs. Excessive earmarking can undermine this goal, which is why I am disappointed with the widespread earmarking of vital highway, airport, and transit construction and research programs contained in the Act. This earmarking is without regard to criteria established to ensure that these are sound investments. Many earmarks are aimed at projects that have not advanced in the local planning process, and the funding will often lie unused for a long period of time. This deprives ready-to-go projects of needed Federal assistance. I ask the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to work with the Department of Transportation to see that essential

projects that can quickly utilize Federal funding are able to move forward.

I am pleased that H.R. 4475 includes additional requested resources for the Internal Revenue Service to implement the bipartisan IRS reform legislation enacted in 1998. The Act also responds to my request for additional resources for counterterrorism programs in the Department of the Treasury, thereby enhancing the Federal Government's efforts to deter and detect terrorist activity and to continue the high level of effort undertaken during Millennium celebration events.

I am pleased that H.R. 4475 includes funding the Unanticipated Needs account, which can be used by the President to meet needs in furtherance of the national interest, security, or defense. I am especially pleased this account includes the funding I sought to assist the people of Puerto Rico in deciding their islands' future status, an issue that the Puerto Ricans have long asked us to clarify. Other Presidents and I have sought legislative action, and there has been some, but this is the first piece of legislation passed by both Houses of Congress that supports Puerto Rico choosing its future status. The account also provides funds to educate Puerto Ricans on the available options, relying on the Office of the President to ensure the options presented to the voters are realistic in light of the Constitution and the basic laws and policies of the United States. Once the options have been presented, the account also funds a vote by the Puerto Rican people to choose what their status should be. I am already working to clarify the options, and I am also working to ensure that the next President will continue the effort to resolve this issue.

I also note that language purporting to require congressional committee approval for a plan to spend certain funds is unconstitutional under the Supreme Court's holding in *INS v. Chadha*, 462 U.S. 919 (1983). In addition, section 347 purports to restrict the contents and form of the President's budgetary proposal. This provision would interfere with the President's constitutional power to recommend legislation and will accordingly be construed as advisory.

Overall, H.R. 4475 makes a positive contribution to meeting the transportation and other

needs of this country. I am pleased to sign it into law. October 23, 2000.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

NOTE: H.R. 4475, approved October 23, was assigned Public Law No. 106-346.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Maurice D. Hinchey in
Kingston, New York
October 23, 2000

Thank you very much. First of all, thank you for the wonderful welcome. I am delighted to be here. You may know that on the way over here today, I stopped at your local elementary school and shook hands with the principal, the teachers, and as many of the eager students as I could reach. *[Laughter]* And they made a lot of wonderful signs, and I signed them, and I'm very grateful for that. I had a great time.

I also went across the street and shook hands with the kids at the pizza place. *[Laughter]* But because I was a little late, I didn't have one. *[Laughter]* I want to thank Mayor Gallo and Assemblyman Cahill and the other local officials who are here—John Parete, the Ulster County Democratic chairman. And most of all, I want to say I'm honored to be here for Maurice Hinchey.

We came in together, but I want to make absolutely sure he's still there when I go. *[Laughter]* We have fought our fights together. He has taken the risks that I have taken to try to turn the economy around and pull the country together and move us forward.

I'm especially grateful for his leadership for the Patients' Bill of Rights, to put medical decisions back into the hands of medical professionals and their patients; for a Medicare drug program that would provide all of our seniors access to affordable prescription drugs; for our education initiatives and, especially, our school construction initiative, which would give States like New York that have either overcrowded or falling down schools the funds they need to help repair or build or modernize schools without putting all of the burden on the local property tax payers; and for his help for the environment, because one of the things I was determined to do when I became President is to prove

we could grow the economy and improve the environment at the same time.

You know, when things go well, the President tends to get credit, and when they don't, well, that's the way it goes. *[Laughter]* Harry Truman said, "The buck stops here." But sometimes I think the credit should be more broadly shared, first and foremost with the American people. But you need to know that on more than one occasion, the critical initiative, beginning with our economic plan in 1993, has passed by one vote in Congress. So, if it hadn't been for Maurice and people like him, so much of the good things that we have been able to do for America over the last 8 years would not have been possible, and you need to keep him right where he is.

I would also like to say a few words about this Senate race, in which I have a passing interest. *[Laughter]* And I would like to say a few words about Vice President Gore and Senator Lieberman.

But I want to begin by just making two introductory comments. First of all, my heart is filled with gratitude for the people of the United States and especially to the people of New York, who have been so wonderful to me through two elections, giving me the State's 33 electoral votes, along with Al Gore. Last time, about 59 percent of the vote in 52 of the 62 counties supported our efforts, and you will never know how grateful I am.

Secondly, as Maurice said, for all the celebrations we've had in the last few days, our 8-year long effort to stand against ethnic cleansing and genocide and abuse in the Balkans, beginning with our efforts to stop the war in Bosnia, to roll back the expulsion of the people in Kosovo, the embargo on Serbia. Now we have