

ensure that the pilot programs provide that complaining parties may opt out of participation in the pilot programs at any time.

- Fourth, I direct you to submit an assessment of the pilot programs, together with the relevant underlying data, to the EEOC within 180 days of the completion of the 3-year pilot program period.

These steps will ensure that important civil rights of civilian employees of the Department of Defense are protected while preserving con-

gressional intent with regard to the creation of the pilot programs.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: H.R. 4205, approved October 30, which incorporated the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 as an appendix, was assigned Public Law No. 106–398. This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 31. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Statement on Returning Without Approval to the House of Representatives Legislative Branch, Treasury, and General Appropriations Legislation *October 30, 2000*

I am returning herewith without my approval, H.R. 4516, the Legislative Branch and the Treasury and General Appropriations Act, 2001. This bill provides funds for the legislative branch and the White House at a time when the business of the American people remains unfinished.

The Congress' continued refusal to focus on the priorities of the American people leaves me no alternative but to veto this bill. I cannot in good conscience sign a bill that funds the operations of the Congress and the White House before funding our classrooms, fixing our schools, and protecting our workers.

With the largest student enrollment in history, we need a budget that will allow us to repair and modernize crumbling schools, reduce class size, hire more and better trained teachers, ex-

pand after-school programs, and strengthen accountability to turn around failing schools.

I would sign this legislation in the context of a budget that puts the interests of the American people before self-interest or special interests. I urge the Congress to get its priorities in order and send me, without further delay, balanced legislation I can sign.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 30, 2000.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 31. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Remarks on the Veto of Legislative Branch, Treasury, and General Appropriations Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters *October 31, 2000*

The President. Good morning—or good afternoon. We are now a full month past the end of the fiscal year and just a week before election day. Congress still hasn't finished its work. There is still no education budget. There is still no increase in the minimum wage, still no Patients' Bill of Rights or hate crimes bill or mean-

ingful tax relief for middle class Americans, even though all these measures have strong bipartisan support in the country and in the Congress.

Today I want to talk about an appropriations bill the Congress did pass. The Treasury/Postal bill funds these two departments, as well as the operations of Congress and the White

House. Last night, I had no choice but to veto that legislation. I cannot in good conscience sign a bill that funds the operations of Congress and the White House before funding our schools.

Simply put, we should take care of our children before we take care of ourselves. That's a fundamental American value, one that all parents strive to fulfill. I hope the congressional leadership will do the same. We can and we will fund a budget for Congress, but first let's take care of the children, investing more in our schools and demanding more from them, modernizing old schools, building new ones, reducing class size, hiring more and better trained teachers, expanding after-school programs, and turning around failing schools.

With the largest student enrollment in history, the education budget should be our first priority. Yet it seems to be the last things on the mind of the Republican leadership. Just 2 days ago, we were on the verge of making bipartisan progress with a landmark budget for children's education. We thought we had a good-faith agreement with honorable compromises on both sides. That was before the special interests weighed in with the Republican leadership. And when they did, the Republican leadership killed the education bill, a careful agreement that both Democratic and Republican congressional leaders had reached.

As I have said repeatedly, the path to progress is one we have to walk together. We have shown we can do it. Let me say again, a bipartisan coalition stands ready to pass an education budget, to raise the minimum wage, to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights, a hate crimes bill, and a tax bill that is good for children, families, seniors, and small business and millions of Americans without health coverage.

So again, I ask the Republican leadership to set aside partisanship, go back to negotiations, reach honorable compromise. The final week of the election season is a perfect time to recall the basic bargain of our democracy. It's the American people who sent us here; it's our obligation to meet their priorities. So let's roll up our sleeves, get back to work, and finish the work we were sent here to do.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, congressional Republicans assert that there was an arrangement, an understanding with the Treasury/Postal bill and the Transportation bill, that when they agreed to place more money in the IRS fund at the spe-

cific request of the White House, there was an understanding that you would then sign the Treasury/Postal bill, and there would be no questions asked about this underlying pay raise issue. A spokesman for the Speaker's office said, and I'm quoting here, sir, "He lied. Bill Clinton's word has less value than a dollar bill in the Weimar Republic." Would you care to comment, sir?

The President. Well, it's just not true. Nobody ever asked me, and I didn't do it. And I believe that was only reported one place today. It just didn't happen.

I talked to our people about it, and they said, quite to the contrary, even though we negotiated over the Treasury/Postal bill and I would gladly sign it, as I said, if they would pass the education bill, we in fact asked them not to send it down here because, among other things, it had a very low-priority tax cut in it, for them—not just for me but for them—because we thought it would be wrong for them to take care of themselves and for us to take care of ourselves here without taking care of the children of the country. So we, in fact, implored them not to send that bill down here. Mr. Podesta and the rest of my staff just told me that today. And they have assured me—I got my senior staff together—they have assured me no one on the White House staff pledged to sign that bill.

So you know, that's not so. But what is true is the headline that is in the Washington Post this morning. The Republicans and the Democrats negotiated in good faith, and both wanted this education bill. There was a big majority for this in both Houses of Congress. But the leadership of the Republican Party killed it because of the lobbyists on K Street. Now, that's what happened, and it's not right. And we ought to go back to the agreement that was made.

You know, wherever we work together and we get majorities of both Houses and both parties, we do fine. It is the leadership of the other party in Congress and its excessive sensitivity to the special interests that has kept so many of these things from passing. Why in the world could you justify not passing a hate crimes bill, for example, when a majority of both Houses is for it, you've got plain bipartisan majority? I think we all know the answer to that.

So look, we've still got time to do this, and we ought to do it. I'll do my best to do it. There is no point in getting upset and name

calling. Facts are facts. The one fact is indisputable, that we had a process set up; there was an agreement reached; the hard-working Republicans and Democrats worked until 2:30 in the morning. And they showed up with the agreement, and their leaders wrecked it. They said, "But our special interests won't like this. I'm sorry." Now, those are the facts, and they are indisputable.

So we just need to go back to work here and calm down and do what's right.

Latino and Immigrant Fairness Legislation

Q. Mr. President, the "Latino Immigration Fairness Act" consists of three major provisions. My question is, are you going to fight for all three of them? And you—your people—and I think you may have said it yourself—would veto the State/Commerce and Justice appropriation bill if it did not contain the "Latino Immigration Fairness Act"?

The President. I feel very strongly about that. As I said, the Congress is—the leadership of the Republican Party is against it because they say that—apparently they think they made a mistake with the Cuban and Nicaraguan immigrants, and they don't want to make the same mistake with the others.

I think they did the right thing with them and should do the right thing by the other immigrants. That's what I think. So we're fighting for it, and we'll see.

But I just want—I want to start these negotiations again and get back to work. I think that's the important thing. And I think—I didn't have any choice to do what I did last night. I didn't want to do it, but you know, we just can't—we cannot run the Congress in a way that says we can have an agreement, we can put our kids first, we can get the Republicans and Democrats together, and then the leadership of the Republican Congress can just say, "I'm sorry, our interest groups don't like this; they won't accept it. And so never mind what happens to the 52 million kids that are out there in our schools." We just can't do that. And that's the real story here. It's an astonishing development here, after all we've been through these last 6 years, to see this happening again. And it's very sad, and I hope we can get by it in the next 8 days—7 days.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:36 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House, prior to his departure for Louisville, KY.

Remarks at a Rally in Louisville, Kentucky
October 31, 2000

The President. Thank you very, very much. Thank you. Let me say first of all, did Eleanor give a good speech, or what? That was amazing. [Applause] You know, I have some passing experience at these kinds of events. [Laughter] And I was sitting there thinking, this girl is good; she is really good.

I want to say more about her in a moment, but I also want to tell you how honored I am to be back in Kentucky with your great Governor, Paul Patton, and his wife, Judi, who have been such good friends of mine. My longtime friend who had so much to do with much of the good things that Al Gore and I were able to accomplish in Washington, Senator Wendell Ford, we miss you. Thank you. With your great mayor, who owes some of his success to the fact that he and I were born in the same little

town in Arkansas—Hope, Arkansas—thank you so much, Dave Armstrong, for doing a good job here.

I thank your State party chair, Nikki Patton, for being here and for all you Democrats who have showed up to hear a guy who is not running for anything this year. [Laughter] I want to thank our young president of the school's Young Democrats here, Rashi Sheth. Didn't he do a good job today? Let's give him a hand. [Applause]

And I want to thank Charlie Owen for chairing the Gore/Lieberman campaign. But I'm especially here, as all of you know, to support Eleanor Jordan. She represents the best in our party, the best in our country, and what we need for the future of our Congress.