

White House now to either call him or write him a note. I hope he's fine.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:22 p.m. at the food bank's warehouse. In his remarks, he referred to Lynn Brantley, executive director, Capital Area Food Bank.

Videotaped Remarks on the Observance of Ramadan *November 22, 2000*

It is a privilege to deliver again this year, on behalf of the American people, a message of friendship and respect to Muslims around the world as they begin the sacred month of Ramadan.

As America's 6-million-member Muslim community grows in numbers and prominence, Americans of every religious tradition are learning more about the origins and meaning of Islam—that on “the Night of Power,” the angel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet Muhammad and revealed to him the first verses of the Koran; that the Koran declares that Ramadan was the month Allah's words were sent down and so should be spent in fasting.

The rigors undertaken by devout Muslims inspire respect for Islam among people of all faiths. And this can bring hope of greater understanding for good will. It can overflow old boundaries when wholehearted devotion to one's own faith is matched with a devout respect for the faith of others.

That is why we welcome Islam in America. It enriches our country with Islam's teachings of self-discipline, compassion, and commitment to family. It deepens America's respect for Muslims here at home and around the world, from Indonesia to Pakistan, the Middle East, and Africa.

We all had hoped that when this month's crescent Moon first appeared and the month of Ramadan was announced, fasting would begin in a time of peace. Yet, tragically, violence continues, and lives are being lost in the land that is holy to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. For all Americans, these deaths are a source of great sorrow. The Muslim chaplain at Georgetown University, where I attended college, has told me of a verse in the Koran in which Allah tells us that He created nations and tribes so we may know one another, not so we might despise one another.

As the fasting of Ramadan begins, I pray people of all faiths may come to appreciate this precious wisdom of the Koran. And when next month's Moon appears and the Muslim world celebrates Eid al-Fitr, we may also celebrate the revival of our hopes for peace throughout the world.

Ramadan Kareem.

NOTE: The address was videotaped at approximately 11:15 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room for later broadcast on the Department of State American Embassy Television Network. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.

Statement on the Death of David Hermelin *November 22, 2000*

Hillary and I are deeply saddened to learn of the death of our good friend Ambassador David Hermelin.

All of us who knew David admired him deeply for his remarkable combination of energy, wit, optimism, and commitment to family, faith,

and the common good. From the businesses he built to the charities he supported to the causes he championed, David demonstrated the qualities of active citizenship which have made our country the greatest democracy in history. He was a magnificent man. I will be forever grateful

for his friendship, support, and outstanding service as our Ambassador to Norway. With characteristic energy, he made impressive contributions to U.S.-Norway relations, something I saw firsthand when he persuaded me to make the

first-ever visit to Norway by a sitting U.S. President in November of 1999. I will miss him very much.

Hillary and I extend our condolences to his wife, Doreen, their children, and grandchildren.

Statement on Signing the District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 2001 *November 22, 2000*

Today I am signing into law H.R. 5633, the "District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 2001."

I commend the House and Senate for passing a version of the District of Columbia appropriations bill that I can sign. I am pleased that the Majority and Minority were able to come together on this legislation under the leadership of Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton, the District's stalwart champion. While I continue to object to the riders in the enrolled bill, some of the most highly objectionable provisions that would have intruded upon D.C. citizens' right to make decisions about local matters have been deleted or modified from previous versions of the bill. This bill is a fair compromise.

I commend the Congress for providing virtually all of the Federal funds I requested for the District of Columbia. The bill includes essential funding for Courts, Corrections, and the Offender Supervision Agency, and for the tuition assistance program for District of Columbia residents. The bill fully funds the New York Avenue Metro station and provides a start on funding for brownfields remediation and economic development in Anacostia.

I continue to object to remaining riders that violate the principle of home rule, including, but not limited to, provisions infringing on voting rights, HIV/AIDS prevention, abortion, implementation of the Domestic Partners Act, special education, and the Mayor's personnel authorities.

The Act also includes troubling provisions with regard to needle exchange programs in the District. While I am pleased that it does not prohibit private entities from using their own funds for needle exchange programs, the Act does retain a ban on local funds for that purpose, an infringement of "home rule." Even more objectionable is the language that prohibits the exchange of needles in large portions of

the city. In the form in which it passed the House, this language would have had the practical effect of ending needle exchange programs in the District of Columbia. My Administration worked hard to remove this language from the final bill, and we appreciate the work of the conferees to make this provision less harmful and allow for those conducting needle exchange programs to adapt and continue operation. However, even though the language has been improved upon, these provisions are an encroachment on the District's prerogatives, create an unnecessary burden on the District, and could seriously disrupt current HIV prevention efforts.

The Act also prohibits the District from legislating with respect to controlled substances and from freely crafting effective programs for non-violent, drug-dependent offenders. This provision also significantly encroaches on the District's autonomy, and undermines its ability to deal effectively with this serious problem.

The people of the District of Columbia deserve the same respect in ordering their local affairs that the people of our States enjoy. These provisions must be re-examined in the future.

Today marks an important occasion for the District of Columbia. In 1995, the District faced a severe fiscal and managerial crisis, city services were in a shambles, and the city faced deficits as far as the eye could see. Today, thanks to the leadership of Mayor Anthony Williams, the District's finances are in order, city services are being restored, and the city stands on sound financial footing. Later this year, the District will be able to certify 4 straight years of balanced budgets, with growing surpluses, paving the way for cessation of the Financial Authority and a full return to Home Rule.

For our part, we have tried to be a sure and steady friend of the residents of the District of Columbia. In January 1996, I proposed a