

why so many of us are here today, because of the women who came before us, who were determined to see us sit in the high seats; women who reached for the ballot and raised families and traveled long, lonely roads to be the first in the boardroom or in the courtroom or on the battlefield and in the factory floor; women who cracked and shattered those glass ceilings so that my daughters, and all of our sons and daughters, could dream a little bigger and reach a little higher.

So now it's up to us to carry that work forward, to ensure that our daughters and granddaughters have no limits on their dreams, no obstacles to their achievements, and that they have opportunities their mothers and grandmothers and great-grandmothers never

dreamed of. That's the purpose of this Council. Those are the priorities of my Presidency. And I look forward to working with all of you to fulfill them in the months and years to come.

All right, so I'm going to go sign this thing. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:31 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng; Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; Dominique Dawes, member, 1996 U.S. women's Olympic gymnastics team; and Lisa Leslie, center, 2008 U.S. women's Olympic basketball team. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Signing the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 March 11, 2009

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1105, the "Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009." This bill completes the work of last year by providing the funding necessary for the smooth operation of our Nation's Government.

As I announced this past Monday, it is a legitimate constitutional function, and one that promotes the value of transparency, to indicate when a bill that is presented for Presidential signature includes provisions that are subject to well-founded constitutional objections. The Department of Justice has advised that a small number of provisions of the bill raise constitutional concerns.

- *Foreign Affairs.* Certain provisions of the bill, in titles I and IV of Division B, title IV of Division E, and title VII of Division H, would unduly interfere with my constitutional authority in the area of foreign affairs by effectively directing the Executive on how to proceed or not proceed in negotiations or discussions with international organizations and foreign governments. I will not treat these provisions as limiting my ability to negotiate and enter into agreements with foreign nations.
- *United Nations Peacekeeping Missions.* Section 7050 in Division H prohibits the use of certain funds for the use of the Armed Forces in United Nations peacekeeping missions under the command or operational control of a foreign national unless my military advisers have recommended to me that such involvement is in the national interests of the United States. This provision raises constitutional concerns by constraining my choice of particular persons to perform specific command functions in military missions, by conditioning the exercise of my authority as Commander in Chief on the recommendations of subordinates within the military chain of command, and by constraining my diplomatic negotiating authority. Accordingly, I will apply this provision consistent with my constitutional authority and responsibilities.
- *Executive Authority to Control Communications with the Congress.* Sections 714(1) and 714(2) in Division D prohibit the use of appropriations to pay the salary of any Federal officer or employee who interferes with or prohibits certain communications between Federal em-

ployees and Members of Congress. I do not interpret this provision to detract from my authority to direct the heads of executive departments to supervise, control, and correct employees' communications with the Congress in cases where such communications would be unlawful or would reveal information that is properly privileged or otherwise confidential.

- *Legislative Aggrandizements (committee-approval requirements).* Numerous provisions of the legislation purport to condition the authority of officers to spend or reallocate funds on the approval of congressional committees. These are impermissible forms of legislative aggrandizement in the execution of the laws other than by enactment of statutes. Therefore, although my Administration will notify the relevant committees before taking the specified actions, and will accord the recommendations of such committees all appropriate and serious consideration, spending decisions shall not be treated as dependent on the approval of congressional committees. Likewise, one other provision gives congressional committees the power to establish guidelines for funding costs associated with implementing secu-

rity improvements to buildings. Executive officials shall treat such guidelines as advisory. Yet another provision requires the Secretary of the Treasury to accede to all requests of a Board of Trustees that contains congressional representatives. The Secretary shall treat such requests as non-binding.

- *Recommendations Clause Concerns.* Several provisions of the Act (including sections 211 and 224(b) of title II of Division I, and section 713 in Division A), effectively purport to require me and other executive officers to submit budget requests to the Congress in particular forms. Because the Constitution gives the President the discretion to recommend only "such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient" (Article II, section 3 of the Constitution), the specified officers and I shall treat these directions as precatory.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
March 11, 2009.

NOTE: H.R. 1105, approved March 11, was assigned Public Law No. 111–8.

Interview With Regional Reporters March 11, 2009

The President. So I usually don't start these off with a long statement. Obviously, our overarching focus right now is the economy. I am very mindful of the hardships that are taking place all throughout the country: families who are losing their homes, losing their jobs, losing their health care. I get a sampling of the letters that are sent to me every day, and some of the stories are just heartbreaking.

And everything that we're doing is focused on not only pulling this economy out of what is the worst recession since the Great Depression, but also looking at ways that we can set a foundation for long-term economic growth. You know, the days of growing the economy through an overheated housing market or through peo-

ple running up exorbitant credit card bills is over.

We've got to put our growth model on a different footing, and that means that we've got to deal with our health care system and reduce costs for families, businesses, and governments. It means that we have to think through our energy policy so that we're not so badly dependent on foreign oil. It means we've got to improve our education system so that our young people are equipped with the skills and knowledge that they're going to need to get jobs in the future.

And so the Recovery and Reinvestment Act that we passed reflected those priorities. You know, we had tax cuts to the middle class, but also investments on health information