

Statement on Signing the Hmong Veterans Naturalization Act of 2000

May 26, 2000

Today I signed H.R. 371, the Hmong Veterans Naturalization Act of 2000. This legislation is a tribute to the service, courage, and sacrifice of the Hmong people who were our allies in Laos during the Vietnam war. After the Vietnam war, many Hmong soldiers and their families came to the * United States and have become part of the social fabric of American society. They work, pay taxes, and have raised families and made America their home. However, some Hmongs seeking to become American citizens have faced great difficulty meeting the requirements for naturalization for reasons associated with the unique circumstances of the Hmong culture. Until recently, the Hmong people had no written language. Without this experience, learning English, a requirement of naturalization, has been much more difficult for some Hmongs. This requirement has prevented many Hmongs from becoming full participants in American society. This new law will waive the English language requirement and provide special consideration for the civics requirement for Hmong veterans and their families. This law is a small step but an important one in honoring the immense sacrifices that the Hmong people made in supporting our efforts in Southeast Asia. I would like to recognize Representative Bruce Vento and Senator Wellstone, sponsors of the legislation, for their leadership on this issue.

NOTE: H.R. 371, approved May 26, was assigned Public Law No. 106-207. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the Meat and Poultry Inspection System

May 26, 2000

When this administration came into office, meat and poultry were inspected by the same old method used for 90 years. In 1996, we began a comprehensive, science-based sys-

tem that, for the first time, requires plants to reduce bacterial contamination in meat and poultry.

This system has been a tremendous success. In just 2 years, the presence of dangerous salmonella on meat and poultry has been reduced by up to 50 percent, and illnesses caused by salmonella are also down.

Unfortunately, a small minority of meat plants are acting against the best interests of the American people. They threaten to undermine an inspection system that is clearly effective in reducing food poisoning, jeopardizing the confidence that consumers have in the safety of the food they eat.

The Justice Department has vigorously defended this vital program and will decide on an expedited basis what further legal action to take. I am also calling on the food industry to use its vast resources to help ensure that all meat processing plants maintain the strictest possible safety standards.

This administration will continue to use every available tool to ensure that our food supply remains the safest in the world.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

May 27, 2000

Good morning. Memorial Day weekend is a special time to honor those who have fought for our freedom but also to gather with our family and friends at picnics and backyard barbecues. Where we take pride in serving up plenty of good food, we should also take pains that the food we serve is good for us. Today I want to talk about new steps we're taking to empower Americans with the latest and best information on food and nutrition.

For 20 years now, the Federal Government has been setting guidelines for good nutrition based on the best scientific evidence. And for over 6 years, the Government has required nutrition labeling on most foods. With better information, Americans are making better choices. We're eating less fat as a percentage of our diet, more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and average blood cholesterol levels are going down.

* White House correction.