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10-1-96

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

EMBARGOED UNTIL SIGNING

September 30, 1996

STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT

I have signed into law tonight H.R. 3610, a fiscal 1997 omnibus appropriations and immigration reform bill.

This bill is good for America, and I am pleased that my Administration could fashion it with Congress on a bipartisan basis. It moves us further toward our goal of a balanced budget while protecting our values and priorities -- educating our children, providing a clean environment, fighting crime, protecting our families from drugs, and combating terrorism.

The bill restores substantial sums for education and training, fully paid for in my balanced budget plan and furthering my agenda of life-long education to help Americans acquire the skills they need to get good jobs in the new global economy.

It provides the funds through which Head Start can serve an additional 50,000 disadvantaged young children; fulfills my request for the Goals 2000 education reform program to help states raise their academic standards; increases funding for the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program, helping states educate children to reduce violence and drug abuse; and fulfills my request for the largest Pell Grant college scholarship awards in history, expanding the number of middle- and low-income students who receive aid by 126,000 -- to 3.8 million.

For the environment, the bill provides funds to support the Environmental Protection Agency's early implementation of two major new environmental laws that I signed this summer -- the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Pesticide and Food Safety Law. At the same time, the bill does not contain any of the riders that would have been harmful to the environment.

For law enforcement, the bill ensures that my program to put 100,000 more police on the streets of America's communities by the year 2000 proceeds on schedule; with this bill, we will have provided funding for 64,000 of the 100,000 that I called for at the start of my Administration. The bill also increases funds for Justice Department law enforcement programs, for the FBI's crime-fighting efforts, and for new Federal prisons.

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As I had urged, the bill also extends the Brady Bill to ensure that those who commit domestic violence cannot purchase guns, rejecting efforts to weaken that proposal.

I am pleased that the bill provides \$1.4 billion in funding to address my requests for anti-drug programs. It doubles funding for Drug Courts; increases funds for drug interdiction efforts by the Defense, Transportation, and Treasury departments; and provides the resources to expand the Drug Enforcement Administration's domestic efforts along the Southwest border and elsewhere.

For counter-terrorism, the bill funds my request for over \$1.1 billion to fight terrorism and to improve aviation security and safety. It enables the Justice and Treasury Departments to better investigate and prosecute terrorist acts, and it provides funds to implement the recommendations of Vice President Gore's Commission on Aviation Safety and Security and the Federal Aviation Administration's recent 90-day safety review. These funds will enable us to hire 300 more aviation security personnel, deploy new explosive detection teams, and buy high-technology bomb detection equipment to screen luggage.

This bill also includes landmark immigration reform legislation that reinforces the efforts we have made over the last three years to combat illegal immigration. It strengthens the rule of law by cracking down on illegal immigration at the border, in the workplace, and in the criminal justice system -- without punishing those living in the United States legally, or allowing children to be kept out of schools and sent into the streets.

The bill also provides needed resources to respond to fires in the western part of the nation and to the devastation brought by Hurricanes Fran and Hortense.

I am disappointed that one of my priorities -- a ban on physician "gag rules" -- was not included in the bill. Several States have passed similar legislation to ensure that doctors have the freedom to inform their patients of the full range of medical treatment options, and Congress should have reached agreement on this measure.

Nevertheless, this bill is good for America, and I am pleased to sign it.

Immigration Law
April 1, 1997

Yesterday, the US District Court for the District of Columbia enjoined for four days the enforcement of new regulations concerning the new immigration law passed in 1996. This was in response to a lawsuit filed by several immigrants' rights organizations, which alleged that there was insufficient public notice surrounding the new regulations (Those new regulations, signed into law by the President last year, speed up deportation proceedings, among other things.) Late last night, the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit stayed the district court's injunction, thereby allowing the regulations to go into effect.

- The INS was four days late in issuing its regulations. However, the regulations were made available to the public through the Federal Register well before the thirty-day period set forth in the statute.
- Delaying the implementation of the regulations will produce mass confusion. Several million visas are processed in any given four day period.

Drafted: MEGlynn
Cleared: Bert Brandenburg, DoJ

Background: Yesterday, the United States District Court for the District of Columbia enjoined, for four days, enforcement of the regulations recently issued by the DOJ to implement the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA). Shortly after midnight, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit stayed the district court's order. The suit, by several immigrants' rights groups, claimed that the INS violated a requirement of the APA and IIRIRA that the regulations be promulgated at least 30 days in advance of the April 1, 1997 effective date of IIRIRA. The Department used an emergency procedure to expedite availability of the regulation to the public, and believes that no rule was violated. In addition, the Department believes that allowing the statute to go into effect without the implementing regulations would create a grave harm to the public interest, particularly as regards the procedural protections afforded by the regulations to aliens whom the government seeks to remove from the United States.

Q: What did the district court order?

A: The district court prohibited the INS from applying its regulations implementing the new immigration law, but did not prohibit the statute itself from going into effect. The court's injunction was for four days.

Q: What was the basis of the lawsuit?

A: The complaint was that the INS was four days late in issuing its regulations. However, the regulations were made available to the public at the Federal Register through an emergency procedure well before the thirty-day period set forth in the statute.

Q: Could the regulations have been issued sooner?

A: The implementation of this statute was a massive effort that involved, among other things, overhauling the immigration regulations, rewriting INS procedures, revising or replacing dozens of forms, issuing extensive guidance to the field, and training thousands of INS officers. The statute allowed only five months to put the implementation into place. Under this severe deadline, the INS and the Department of Justice produced a sound set of regulations and procedures, with considerable opportunity for public input, and put them into place in time for the statute to go into effect today. It's a considerable accomplishment.

Q: Are the regulations now in effect?

A: Yes. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit stayed the district court's injunction shortly after midnight, thereby allowing the regulations to go into effect.

Q: What is the status of the case?

A: A briefing schedule has not yet been set.

Contact: Eric Andrus (514-8080), INS Press Office; Brad Glassman (305-0846) or Brian Hayes (514-4616), INS Office of the General Counsel.

**FY 1996 Legal Immigration Numbers
Contact Eric Andrus, INS, 202/514-8080**

Background

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) announced today that 915,900 persons legally immigrated to the United States in Fiscal Year 1996, a 27 percent increase over FY 1995's total of 720,461. The INS annually releases retrospective reports on legal immigration to the United States.

Q: What is the Administration's response to this seemingly large increase?

A: The Administration has always supported legal immigration that protects American workers, reunites families, and encourages citizenship. The yearly fluctuations in levels of legal immigration that are evident in today's figures are expected because of the way the law works. It accommodates yearly changes in demand for employment-based visas, protecting American workers from unfair competition and also providing U.S. employers with needed skilled workers. Yearly changes in the law also reflect the mechanics of how family reunification occurs and the pace at which immigrants seek and achieve naturalization.

Legal immigration, supported by aggressive control of illegal immigration, is an important part of this nation's future. As the President said in his State of the Union address, legal immigration and the diversity that results from it are parts of the strength of America.

Q: Does the Administration have any plans to move forward with legal immigration reform?

A: (per Steve Warnath) Majority Leader Lott has said that he will not put any such legislation forward this year. This view has also been voiced by Senator Abraham, new chair of the Immigration Subcommittee. The Administration supports appropriate improvement and reform of the nation's legal immigration system – as long as such reform reflects the Administration's pro-family, pro-work, pro-naturalization principles.

6/5/97

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Vice President

For Immediate Release:
June 4, 1997

Contact:(202) 456-7035

STATEMENT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

ON THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS

SUBCOMMITTEE WELFARE PROPOSAL

I am very concerned about how the proposed Republican amendments to the welfare law would affect disabled legal immigrants. The amendments are harsh, unfair, and unnecessary, and they violate the terms of the bipartisan balanced budget agreement by failing to restore a minimal safety net for these individuals.

The Republican proposal is unfair to families of limited means. In failing to restore benefits for SSI beneficiaries whose sponsors have incomes over 150 percent of the poverty level, it would cut off 100,000 severely disabled immigrants who would receive benefits under the budget agreement. A family of four with an income as low as \$24,000 would have to fully support a person with a severe disability.

The Republican proposal also fails to protect SSI and Medicaid benefits for legal immigrants who were in the United States as of August 23, 1996 and later become disabled. As a result, it violates a key provision in the budget agreement that was designed to target assistance to the most vulnerable individuals.

The provisions affecting disabled legal immigrants were an important element of the budget agreement, and the Administration worked hard to secure them. We expect both sides

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to adhere to them.

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Message Sent To: _____

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Vice President

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: (202) 456-7035

Thursday, June 5, 1997

VICE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES WELFARE-TO-WORK COMMITMENTS OF DEPARTMENTS, MAJOR AGENCIES

Washington, D.C. -- Vice President Al Gore today (6/5) announced the commitment of each Cabinet department and major agency to hire specific numbers of welfare recipients over the next four years.

The commitments, outlined in the Vice President's new pamphlet -- *Federal Welfare-To-Work Commitments, A Report to President Bill Clinton* -- will ensure that the Federal Government meets the President's goal of hiring 10,000 welfare recipients over the next four years.

"All employers, including the federal government, have a role to play in moving people from welfare to work," the Vice President said. The report which I am releasing today demonstrates how the Federal government will do its fair share and lead by example."

The report stresses four elements necessary for any organization to succeed in hiring and retaining welfare recipients.

- **A leadership commitment tailored to the mission and culture of the organization.** Energy Secretary Frederico Peña, for example, is holding a one-day workshop of his department's managers. Defense Secretary William Cohen has committed to hire 1,600 welfare recipients and will send a personal request to individual leaders in the contractor community.
- **Recruitment strategies that target the right person for the right job.** Agencies will send job announcements to social service offices, private industry councils, and one-stop career centers. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt will build on the success of current programs like the Youth Conservation Corps and the recruitment strategies of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and he has outlined a recruitment process that identifies eight work categories and associated skills needed for them.
- **Retention policies like supervisory training, mentoring, child care and transportation support.** Labor Secretary Alexis Herman has created a free resource guide and training packages for those hiring welfare recipients and has offered to provide technical assistance in the field. This training was developed by studying the best practices of the most successful welfare-to-work programs in the country.

- **A commitment to leverage hiring with partners in the public and private sectors.** Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater is encouraging private sector transportation employers to make a commitment to hire welfare recipients.

On May 29, the Vice President announced the creation of a Welfare-to-Work Coalition to Sustain Success that will help welfare recipients keep the jobs they find. Studies have shown that large numbers of welfare recipients lost the jobs they get within 12 to 16 months. Working with federal and state offices, private organizations, and business, members of the coalition will identify available resources and provide support that new workers need most to retain jobs -- mentoring, advice, and other support.

Copies of the report are available by calling the National Performance Review at (202) 632-0150 or on the website (w2w.fed.gov).

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