

FOIA MARKER

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Series/Staff Member: Terry Edmonds

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Folder Title:

VA HUD 10/20/99 [2]

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DRAFT
MESSAGE FRAMEWORK / APPROPRIATIONS ENDGAME

The President is committed to keeping the country on the path of prosperity through fiscal discipline and investments in our nation's future. In the coming days, the President will fight for a final budget that reflects these priorities:

Strengthening Education

- Reducing class size by hiring 100,000 qualified teachers
- Installing computers in classrooms to prepare students for the 21st Century
- Investing in after school programs to keep kids safe
- Strengthening accountability in our schools to ensure results
- Expanding Headstart to ensure that children start school ready to learn

Fighting Crime

- Making neighborhoods safer by putting 50,000 more cops on the beat, and getting guns off the street

Protecting our Environment

- Rejecting anti-environmental "riders" that serve special interests rather than national interests.
- Preserving and protecting our nation's treasured landscapes
- Protecting our communities' quality of life and managing urban sprawl

[Helping Americans When Disaster Strikes]

- Providing important funding to help victims of natural disasters – including Hurricane Floyd – rebuild their lives

[National Security]

- Preserving America's leadership position around the world

Final 10/20/99 11:15am
Glastris/Edmonds

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS AT VA/HUD APPROPRIATIONS BILL
SIGNING
OVAL OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, DC
October 20, 1999

Acknowledgements: Sens. Stevens, Byrd, Bond,
Mikulski. Reps. Young, Obey, Walsh, Mollohan. Secs.
Cuomo, West. Admin. Colwell, Golden. Director Witt.

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I believe that the VA/HUD bill that I am about to sign meets these criteria. It not only maintains the fiscal discipline that has led us to this unprecedented period of prosperity, it also honors our highest values.

We value fairness and work. This bill reflects that by strengthening fair housing enforcement and by providing housing vouchers to help 60,000 more hard-working low-income families move closer to where the jobs are. It also provides significant increases in housing for elderly Americans and puts in place a plan to ensure that they will continue to have safe, affordable places to live.

We value opportunity. This bill expands opportunity to those who have not yet felt the full benefits of our economic prosperity. It maintains our commitments to empowerment zones and enterprise communities, while adding part of my New Markets initiative, to give investors the same incentives to invest in our inner cities and poor rural areas that they currently get to invest in new markets overseas.

We value clean air and clean water. This bill provides the Environmental Protection Agency with the resources it needs to protect our air and water.

We value our fighting men and women. And thanks to the leadership of the Vice President, and the commitment of this Congress, this bill adds the extra resources necessary to improve veterans health care.

We value strong communities. This bill will help young people continue to serve their communities through AmeriCorps. It also provides adequate funding to help communities cope with hurricanes and other unforeseen natural disasters.

This bill also looks to the future. It gives NASA the resources it needs to probe the mysteries of space, and provides the National Science Foundation the extra resources it needs to fund research on the frontiers of information technology.

This legislation is important not just for what it will achieve, but for how it was achieved. I am pleased that my Administration and the Congress were able to work together successfully on this bill – in a spirit of bipartisan cooperation – to resolve our respective differences.

Together, we produced legislation that is fully paid for and effectively addresses critical needs of the American people.

We are especially pleased that we were able to achieve acceptable funding levels in a number of areas by providing offsets that were agreed on by both sides.

Last night, I met with congressional leaders from both parties. We agreed to work together in that same spirit to resolve our differences and make the tough choices necessary to reach ^{a compromise} agreement on our other outstanding values and budget priorities. First and foremost, we must protect Social Security and strengthen Medicare with a prescription drug benefit. I have a plan that does that – without dipping into the Social Security surplus.

I believe those priorities must also include making sure the largest and most diverse student body in our history has the world-class education they need for the 21st century. That includes reducing class size by hiring 100,000 qualified teachers, building or modernizing 6,000 schools, connecting every classroom to the Internet, investing in afterschool programs to keep our kids safe, and demanding accountability so we can turn around failing schools.

We must also work together to keep the crime rate going down. That means doing more of what we know works -- putting 50,000 more community police officers in our neighborhoods.

And it means putting our differences aside to honor our commitment to our environment, our natural landscape and our national security.

We can make this fall a real season of progress, if we work together to pass a budget that lives within its means while living up to our values.

America will be stronger in the 21st Century because of what we have achieved here today. I hope that this bill will be a prelude to greater progress on in the days ahead.

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