

was accomplished through the sacrifice of thousands of Americans of all colors who courageously faced down a terrible injustice.

At the time the Voting Rights Act was enacted, people of color in many parts of the country were denied the right to exercise the most fundamental right of American democracy—the right to vote. African-American voter registration was practically non-existent in many areas due to an organized system of disenfranchisement, often backed by brutal intimidation, designed to fence people out of the political process.

In the 30 years since the enactment of the Voting Rights Act, minority registration rates have soared and thousands of people who once could not get elected simply because of the color of their skin are serving in Congress, State houses, and city halls throughout the country.

More important than those results, however, has been the effect of opening our democracy to all Americans. The Voting Rights Act guarantees that no American need ever again be afraid to register to vote, no American need ever again fear the walk to the polling place, no American need ever again fear that their vote is not wanted or will not count.

In signing the law, President Johnson said, “This act flows from a clear and simple wrong. Its only purpose is to right that wrong . . . The wrong is one which no American, in his heart, can justify. The right is one which no American, true to our principles, can deny.”

On this 30th anniversary, my administration reaffirms its commitment to the full enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. We must continue to protect the right of every American to fully participate in the electoral process. I challenge Americans of all races and colors to rededicate ourselves to exercising our precious right to vote. Voting is the oxygen of democracy, and millions of Americans have given their last breath to keep that right alive. So, even as we celebrate 30 years of righting a terrible wrong, we must keep working to make sure that 30 years from now, every American over the age of 18 is a voting American.

### **Statement on Signing the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions Legislation**

*August 4, 1995*

On July 27, 1995, I approved H.R. 1944, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Additional Disaster Assistance, for Anti-terrorism Initiatives, for Assistance in the Recovery from the Tragedy that Occurred at Oklahoma City, and Rescissions Act, 1995. This legislation shows how we can work together to produce good legislation.

From the start of this rescission process, I agreed with the Congress on the need to cut spending. The question was, how should we do it?

I vetoed the original rescission bill because it would have cut spending the wrong way, by targeting education and training, environmental protection, and other key national priorities. I then worked with Republicans and Democrats alike to produce a better bill. I am pleased that this bill cuts nearly \$16 billion in spending while protecting our key investments in education and training, the environment, and other priorities.

Like the earlier version, this bill also provides much-needed supplemental funds that I have sought for disaster relief activities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Federal response to the bombing in Oklahoma City, increased anti-terrorism efforts, and debt relief to Jordan to facilitate progress toward a Middle East peace settlement.

To be sure, I do not support every provision of this bill. For instance, I still do not believe that this bill should contain any of the provisions relating to timber. But the final bill does contain changes in the language that preserve our ability to implement the current forest plans and their standards, and protect other resources such as clean water and fisheries. In addition, I am pleased that the Congress amended the bill to limit its special authorities for timber sales to end on December 31, 1996. Therefore, I have directed the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and other Federal agencies to carry out timber salvage

activities consistent with our forest plans and existing environmental laws.

In addition, though this bill includes a rescission of summer youth jobs funding for the summer of 1996, the Administration continues to support the program and will work with the Congress in the FY 1996 appropriations process to ensure that the program for the summer of 1996 is funded.

I have designated as an emergency all funds in this Act so designated by the Congress that I had not previously designated pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

I am pleased that bipartisan leaders of Congress worked with me to produce a good bill. Working together, we can continue to produce good legislation for the American people.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
August 4, 1995.

NOTE: H.R. 1944, approved July 27, was assigned Public Law No. 104-19.

### **Statement on Signing the District of Columbia Emergency Highway Relief Act**

*August 4, 1995*

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 2017, the District of Columbia Emergency Highway Relief Act, a law to enable our Nation's capital city to advance critically needed highway construction projects. By temporarily waiving the District's cost-sharing requirements for these projects, this legislation assists the District during its period of fiscal crisis in a very practical and important way without imposing any additional cost on the American taxpayer.

Recognizing the importance of maintaining the District's highways for its residents, commuters from throughout the national capital area, and thousands of tourists from around the Nation and the world, this Administration initiated legislation to secure a similar temporary waiver for the District. With bipartisan and intergovernmental support, and through the dedicated efforts of

members of the congressional delegation from this region, this legislation was expeditiously passed by both houses of Congress.

The District will be held accountable for the funds advanced for highway construction under this bill. The District is required to repay its share and must establish a dedicated highway fund to ensure it is able to make this repayment and to meet its matching share requirement in the future.

This legislation will enable the District to begin rebuilding its infrastructure almost immediately, as projects that were stalled for months due to a lack of funds can now quickly resume, creating many new jobs and safer streets for all who come to our Nation's capital.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
August 4, 1995.

NOTE: H.R. 2017, approved August 4, was assigned Public Law No. 104-21.

### **Message to the Congress Transmitting the District of Columbia Financial Authority Budget**

*August 4, 1995*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

In accordance with section 106(a) of the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority Act of 1995, I am transmitting the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority's operating budget for FY 1996.

The Authority's request for its FY 1996 operating budget is \$3.5 million. This budget was developed based on an estimated staffing level of 35 full-time employees. After reviewing the budgets and staffing levels of other control boards, the Authority believes this staffing level is the minimum necessary to carry out its wide range of fiscal, management, and legal responsibilities.

This transmittal does not represent an endorsement of the budget's contents.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
August 4, 1995.