

**Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Eminent Domain Prevention Act**

*October 2, 1996*

*To the House of Representatives:*

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 2909, the "Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Eminent Domain Prevention Act."

This bill would prohibit the use of eminent domain authority for the protection of the public's fish and wildlife resources at portions of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in the States of New Hampshire and Vermont. Because it is unnecessary and would undermine important governmental interests, I cannot support it.

First, the Conte Refuge poses no threat to property owners. Located along the Connecticut River in the States of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, it represents an entirely new kind of national wildlife refuge. Rather than relying on the traditional approach of acquiring large tracts of land, the comprehensive plan for the Conte Refuge provides that only small amounts will come into Federal ownership—a total of only 1,200 acres in New Hampshire and Vermont, along with conservation easements for an additional 760 acres. Instead of Federal land acquisition, the main emphasis for the Refuge will be on restoring the Connecticut River watershed through voluntary partnerships, cooperative agreements, and environmental education. The Fish and Wildlife Service has no intention of using its eminent domain authority.

Second, this bill would undermine a constitutionally bestowed authority of the Federal Government by prohibiting the use of eminent domain for fish and wildlife conservation. The truth is that the Fish and Wildlife Service almost never uses eminent domain for wildlife conservation purposes—on a nationwide basis, since 1989, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has only used its eminent domain power with the consent of the owner to settle price or title differences. Still, eminent domain remains an important tool of last resort, to protect the public's in-

terest in fish and wildlife resources should unforeseen circumstances arise.

Private property is a fundamental American right and value. But this bill is unnecessary and would erode a constitutional authority that has served the public interest for over 200 years. As stated during debate on the bill in the House of Representatives, H.R. 2909 is a solution in search of a problem.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
October 2, 1996.

**Proclamation 6924—National Student Voter Education Day, 1996**

*October 2, 1996*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

This election season marks the 25th anniversary of suffrage for Americans between the ages of 18 and 20. With the ratification of the 26th amendment to the Constitution in July of 1971, which lowered the voting age from 21 to 18, our Nation placed its trust in these young people and gave them a clearer voice in the halls of government.

America's bold experiment in self-government has inspired over 200 years of struggle for a more complete sense of justice and freedom, an effort etched in the history of the Constitution and its amendments. Emancipation, women's suffrage, civil rights, voting rights—all of these battles were fought and won by citizens of conscience and conviction who joined together to bring our Nation closer to the ideals enshrined in our Constitution of full and equal representation and participation.

Since 1971, America's young adults have taken their rightful place in this march toward true democracy and opportunity. Living up to the trust placed in them and meeting this profound responsibility of citizenship, they have voted in large numbers and have played a crucial role in choosing leaders and defining issues at the local, State, and national levels. Generous in spirit, optimistic and idealistic in outlook, they have often proved to be the conscience of our Nation.

Now we are entering a new era in our national existence. We are approaching a time unlike any in our past, in which ideas and information will move around the world at unprecedented speed, and in which there will be more opportunity for people to live out their dreams than ever before. I strongly urge today's young Americans to step forward and accept the challenge of helping to shape our Nation as we move into the 21st century. Register to vote, study the issues and the candidates, and think seriously about what kind of country you want America to be. And then, like the millions of Americans who have gone before you, exercise what may be your most important right—the right to vote.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 2, 1996, as National Student Voter Education Day, I call upon Federal, State, and local officials, as well as leaders of civic, educational, and religious organizations to conduct meaningful ceremonies and programs in their schools, churches, and other community gathering places to foster a better understanding of the 26th amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the rights and duties of citizenship.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this second day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

**William J. Clinton**

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 4.

## **Remarks on Signing the Comprehensive Methamphetamine Control Act of 1996**

*October 3, 1996*

Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Attorney General Reno; Secretary Rubin; Secretary Shalala; General McCaffrey; OMB Director Frank Raines; Under Secretary Kelly; our ATF Director, John McGaw; Bonnie Campbell; Bob Scully and the board members of NAPO; to the families who are here represented that were mentioned by the Attorney General who have paid such a great price to serve our country in law enforcement. To the Members of Congress who are here who supported this action in a completely bipartisan way, I thank you for being here: Senator Biden, Senator Graham, Senator Feinstein, Senator John Kerry, Senator Reid, Senator Specter, Senator Wellstone, Congressman Conyers, Congressman Fazio, Congressman Fox, Congressman Frost, Congressman Luther, Congressman Studds. I thank you all for your active support of these initiatives and for your presence here today.

I would like to begin by saluting the brave men and women who are in law enforcement in the United States. Before this ceremony, I had the honor of meeting and presenting the annual Top Cop award to 25 law enforcement officials from around the country who have displayed heroism, devotion to duty, and service to their communities that is truly extraordinary. That service is also on display in every community every day. Our police are at the center of our strategy as a nation for fighting crime, and today I think every American should give them thanks. So I would like to ask all of you to recognize those who have been awarded the Top Cop award behind us. [*Applause*]

I would also like to say again a special word of thanks to Richard Hagerman and Donna Whitson, to the O'Hare and Alou families, and to Karen Degan and her family for their remarkable work to prove that representative