

**Message to the Senate Transmitting
the Inter-American Convention
Against Corruption and
Documentation**

April 1, 1998

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption ("the Convention"), adopted and opened for signature at the Specialized Conference of the Organization of American States (OAS) at Caracas, Venezuela, on March 29, 1996. The Convention was signed by the United States on June 27, 1996, at the twenty-seventh regular session of the OAS General Assembly meeting in Panama City, Panama. In addition, for the information of the Senate, I transmit the report of the Department of State with respect to the Convention.

The Convention was the first multilateral Convention of its kind in the world to be adopted. The provisions of the Convention are explained in the accompanying report of the Department of State. The report also sets forth proposed understandings that would be deposited by the United States with its instrument of ratification. The Convention will not require implementing legislation for the United States.

The Convention should be an effective tool to assist in the hemispheric effort to combat corruption, and could also enhance the law enforcement efforts of the States Parties in other areas, given the links that often exist between corruption and organized criminal activity such as drug trafficking. The Convention provides for a broad range of cooperation, including extradition, mutual legal assistance, and measures regarding property, in relation to the acts of corruption described in the Convention.

The Convention also imposes on the States Parties an obligation to criminalize acts of corruption if they have not already done so. Especially noteworthy is the obligation to criminalize the bribery of foreign government officials. This provision was included in the Convention at the behest of the United States negotiating delegation. In recent years, the United States Government has

sought in a number of multilateral fora to persuade other governments to adopt legislation akin to the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. This Convention represents a significant breakthrough on that front and should lend impetus to similar measures in other multilateral groups.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Convention, and that it give its advice and consent to ratification, subject to the understandings described in the accompanying report of the Department of State.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
April 1, 1998.

**Letter to the Speaker of the House
on the Disadvantaged Business
Enterprise Program**

April 1, 1998

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On March 28, 1998, I sent a letter to the Leadership addressing my concerns regarding H.R. 2400, the Building Efficient Surface Transportation and Equity Act of 1998. As the House prepares to consider this bill, I want you to know that I am adamantly opposed to any attempts to weaken or repeal the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program extension contained in this legislation.

We have seen time and again that women and minorities are excluded from the contracting process when a DBE program is not in place. The DBE program is not a quota. The existing statute explicitly provides that the Secretary of Transportation may waive the 10 percent goal for any reason and that this benchmark is not to be imposed on any state or locality. Rather, the DBE program encourages participation without imposing rigid requirements of any type.

I ask that you oppose efforts to strike the DBE program from the bill.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.