

Statement on House of Representatives Action on District of Columbia Appropriations Legislation

August 7, 1998

I am deeply disappointed that the District of Columbia appropriations bill passed by the House imposes unacceptable restrictions on our Nation's Capital City.

Early this morning, the House adopted a series of objectionable amendments. They include provisions to establish a school voucher program that would drain resources and attention from the hard work of reforming the District's public schools, to prohibit adoptions in the District by unmarried or unrelated couples, and to prohibit the use of Federal and local funds for needle exchange programs or to deny any funding in the bill to private agencies that operate such programs. These measures all undermine local control, are unacceptable, and should be dropped before Congress completes action on the bill.

I am concerned that other shortcomings in this bill undermine the District of Columbia's autonomy by imposing severe restrictions on local operations. For example, this bill would also bar the use of local District funds for abortions and strip local funds from the advisory neighborhood commissions, which are a foundation of local government.

I am also disappointed that the House fails to fund the much-needed economic revitalization plan for the District of Columbia. I urge Congress to provide appropriate resources for the economic development plan in order to capitalize the locally chartered National Capital Revitalization Corporation, which is key to the future economic growth of the Nation's Capital.

At a time when the District of Columbia has made enormous strides toward financial responsibility and the eventual return of self-government, it is wrong for Congress to turn the clock backward by imposing unwarranted restrictions on broad policymaking and on day-to-day decisionmaking at the local level.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

August 8, 1998

Good morning. I want to talk to you about the terrorist bombings yesterday that took the lives of Americans and Africans at our Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; to tell you what we're doing and how we are combating the larger problem of terrorism that targets Americans.

Most of you have seen the horrible pictures of destruction on television. The bomb attack in Nairobi killed at least 11 Americans. In Dar es Salaam, no Americans lost their lives, but at least one was gravely wounded. In both places, many Africans were killed or wounded, and devastating damage was done to our Embassies and surrounding buildings.

To the families and friends of those who were killed, I know nothing I can say will make sense of your loss. I hope you will take some comfort in the knowledge that your loved ones gave their lives to the highest calling, serving our country, protecting our freedom, and seeking its blessings for others. May God bless their souls.

Late yesterday, emergency response teams, led by our Departments of State and Defense, arrived in Africa. The teams include doctors to tend to the injured, disaster relief experts to get our Embassies up and running again, a military unit to protect our personnel, and counterterrorism specialists to determine what happened and who was responsible.

Americans are targets of terrorism, in part, because we have unique leadership responsibilities in the world, because we act to advance peace and democracy, and because we stand united against terrorism.

To change any of that—to pull back our diplomats and troops from the world's trouble spots, to turn our backs on those taking risks for peace, to weaken our opposition to terrorism—that would give terrorism a victory it must not and will not have.

Instead, we will continue to take the fight to terrorists. Over the past several years, I have intensified our effort on all fronts in this battle: apprehending terrorists wherever they are and bringing them to justice; disrupting terrorist operations; deepening counterterrorism cooperation with our allies