

several important changes to disability compensation benefits. Among them are provisions that will extend monthly disability allowances, vocational training, and health care to women Vietnam veterans' children who are born with certain medical conditions. These women veterans made huge sacrifices to protect our freedom, and it is only just that their children with resulting medical conditions be compensated. Similar benefits are currently afforded to such children who were born with spina bifida, but this Act will expand benefits beyond that one condition.

This legislation also enhances benefits for Filipino veterans of World War II who currently receive disability compensation and burial benefits at a rate equal to one-half the rate that U.S. veterans receive. It reinforces the long-overdue step taken by the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001, that authorizes the payment of these benefits at the full rate to Filipino veterans who have become U.S. citizens or are permanent residents and reside in the United States. In addition, this Act extends to these veterans the eligibility for burial in national cemeteries.

These benefits are just a few examples of the effects that this comprehensive bill will have on improving benefits and services for our veterans. On behalf of a grateful Nation, I am pleased to sign S. 1402. We are indebted to our veterans for the contributions that they have made to protect our security and well-being.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
November 1, 2000.

NOTE: S. 1402, approved November 1, was assigned Public Law No. 106-419.

Statement on Signing Legislation on the Appointment of the Inspector General of the Tennessee Valley Authority

November 1, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 1707. This bill provides that the Inspector General of the Tennessee Valley Authority

is to be appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. Current law provides for the appointment of the Inspector General by the Authority's Board of Directors. Under this legislation, the appointment of the Authority's Inspector General would be made consistent with the appointment of inspectors general at other large agencies. This is an appropriate change.

This bill also authorizes the establishment within the Department of the Treasury of a forensic laboratory to provide services to the Federal Government's Offices of Inspectors General. In implementing this legislation, my Administration will take care both to avoid duplication with other, ongoing forensic activities, and to ensure effective and efficient coordination and cooperation with existing Federal forensic laboratories, such as those operated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Secret Service, and the Postal Service.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
November 1, 2000.

NOTE: S. 1707, approved November 1, was assigned Public Law No. 106-422.

Statement on Signing the National Transportation Safety Board Amendments Act of 2000

November 1, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 2412, the "National Transportation Safety Board Amendments Act of 2000." The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent agency charged with determining the probable cause of transportation accidents and promoting transportation safety. This Act will enhance transportation safety by authorizing appropriations for the NTSB to investigate accidents, conduct safety studies, evaluate the effectiveness of other transportation accident prevention programs, and coordinate Federal assistance for families of victims of catastrophic transportation accidents.

The Act will further advance transportation safety by prohibiting the disclosure of information from cockpit video recorders, or

information from recorders installed on other modes of transportation. It also provides the NTSB with additional tools to carry out its mission, including strengthening the Board's financial management and authorizing the NTSB to enter into agreements with foreign governments to provide technical assistance and accident investigative services. It is my understanding that, prior to entering into agreements with foreign governments, the NTSB will consult with me to avoid any interference with my sole constitutional authority to conduct diplomatic negotiations; and that this provision in no way derogates from the Case-Zablocki Act (Title 1, Section 112b U.S.C.), which requires prior consultation with the Secretary of State.

The Act also includes a provision which authorizes the NTSB to establish an overtime pay schedule which is distinct from the rest of the Government. I am disappointed that the Congress has chosen not to address overtime reform in a comprehensive manner, as proposed by my Administration, to reform overtime pay for all employees who work long hours in response to emergency situations. We hope to continue to work with the Congress to provide a fair and equitable overtime pay structure for all such Federal employees. In the meantime, the NTSB should develop plans to implement the overtime pay provision in consultation with the Office of Personnel Management, and the NTSB should absorb the costs of implementing this provision within its appropriated levels.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
November 1, 2000.

NOTE: S. 2412, approved November 1, was assigned Public Law No. 106-424.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on
Certification of Major Drug
Producing and Transit Countries**
November 1, 2000

Dear _____:

In accordance with the provisions of section 490(h) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (the "Foreign Assistance

Act"), I have determined that the following are major illicit drug producing or major drug-transit countries: Afghanistan, The Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Thailand, Venezuela, and Vietnam. This year I have removed Hong Kong and Taiwan from the list of major illicit drug producing or major drug-transit countries (the "Majors List").

The Majors List, as required by section 490(h) of the Foreign Assistance Act, applies to "countries." The term "countries" is interpreted broadly to include certain entities that exercise autonomy over actions or omissions that would lead to a decision to place them on the list and subsequently to determine eligibility or certification. Therefore, in the past, the Majors List has included certain entities that are not sovereign states.

I wish to make clear that a country's presence on the list of major drug-transit countries is not necessarily an adverse reflection on its counterdrug efforts or on the level of its cooperation with the United States. Among the reasons that major drug-transit countries are placed on the list is the combination of geographical, commercial, and economic factors that allow drugs to transit through a country, in many cases despite the most assiduous enforcement measures.

I also wish to note my concern over the rising imports of foreign-origin, illegal synthetic drugs into the United States, especially MDMA ("Ecstasy") from Europe. We are still collecting information on this problem, and it is a trend that bears watching closely in future years.

Changes to the List

Removal of Hong Kong. Hong Kong has been considered a major drug-transit country since 1987, when the first Majors List was prepared. Its proximity to the Golden Triangle opium cultivation countries of Thailand, Laos, and Burma, along with its highly developed air and sea transport infrastructure, made it a logical transit point for trafficking organizations moving Southeast Asian heroin to the United States and other countries in the Western Hemisphere.