

The act also makes changes in the Weatherization Assistance Program to reduce State costs and better serve low-income Americans.

NOTE: H.R. 2884, approved November 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-469. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the Dedication of the National Japanese-American Memorial

November 9, 2000

Earlier today America honored the patriotism of Japanese-Americans during World War II with the dedication of the National Japanese-American Memorial in the Nation's Capital. Attorney General Janet Reno and Commerce Secretary Norman Mineta joined distinguished members of the Japanese-American community and Americans of all ancestries in reminding us of a time when this country lost sight of the very foundations of democracy it was defending abroad.

This Nation must never forget the difficult lessons of the Japanese-American internment camps during World War II and the inspirational lessons of patriotism in the face of that injustice.

Today I have directed the Secretary of the Interior to develop recommendations to preserve existing internment sites and provide for their public interpretation. In addition, I am signing legislation designating the United States Federal Courthouse for the Western District of Washington in Seattle, Washington, as the William Kenzo Nakamura United States Courthouse. William Nakamura was a student at the University of Washington when he and 120,000 other Japanese-Americans were removed from their communities and forced into internment camps. Despite the injustice of his internment, William Kenzo Nakamura volunteered for the U.S. Army and died fighting for this country in Italy on July 4, 1944. In June of this year, I posthumously awarded him the Medal of Honor in recognition of his courage and heroism.

As the Nation prepares to honor its veterans, it is my hope that the unique contribu-

tion of Japanese-Americans to preserving this Nation's freedom and democracy remains a vital part of America's history.

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

Statement on Signing the Veterans Claims Assistance Act of 2000

November 9, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 4864, the "Veterans Claims Assistance Act of 2000." The Act reaffirms and clarifies the duty of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to assist claimants in developing evidence pertinent to their claims for VA benefits. It eliminates the previous requirement that a claim be well-grounded before VA's duty to assist arises. The Act requires the Secretary to make reasonable efforts to assist a claimant in obtaining evidence to substantiate his or her claim unless it is clear that no reasonable possibility exists that the Secretary's assistance would aid in substantiating the claim. As under current law, the Secretary must consider the entire record of evidence, and when there is an approximate balance of positive and negative evidence regarding an issue material to the determination of a matter, the Secretary must give the benefit of the doubt to the claimant.

Veterans seeking benefits from this Government are deserving of all reasonable assistance that VA has to offer. The benefits administered by the Secretary are a means by which the Nation expresses its profound gratitude for the many sacrifices our veterans have made to protect and defend our freedom. Veterans Day, a day set aside to honor all veterans, is an especially appropriate time for us to ensure that we will continue to pay our debts to these men and women. This Act demonstrates to veterans and to all those currently serving in our military and to those who may serve in the future, that America honors its commitments to those who have served. I am very pleased to approve this new law.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
November 9, 2000.

NOTE: H.R. 4864, approved November 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-475. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on Signing Proclamations for the Vermilion Cliffs and the Craters of the Moon National Monuments

November 9, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign proclamations extending greater protection to two irreplaceable pieces of America's natural and cultural heritage, the Vermilion Cliffs in northern Arizona and the Craters of the Moon in central Idaho. With this action, nearly one million acres of unique natural and historic resources already in public ownership are fully protected.

The Vermilion Cliffs monument covers 293,000 acres of Federal land on the Colorado Plateau in northern Arizona. Humans have explored and lived on this geologic treasure since the earliest known hunters and gatherers crossed the area 12,000 or more years ago. California condors, desert bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, mountain lion, and other mammals roam the canyons and plateaus.

The expansion of the Craters of the Moon monument, originally created by President Coolidge in 1924, adds 661,000 acres of volcanic craters, cones, lava flows, caves, and fissures of the 65-mile-long Great Rift, a geological feature that is comparable to the great rift zones of Iceland and Hawaii.

With these proclamations, this administration continues its commitment to preserving and restoring America's natural treasures, from the Florida Everglades to the California redwoods, for this and future generations.

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

Proclamation 7373—Boundary Enlargement of the Craters of the Moon National Monument

November 9, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The Craters of the Moon National Monument was established on May 2, 1924 (Presidential Proclamation 1694), for the purpose of protecting the unusual landscape of the Craters of the Moon lava field. This "lunar" landscape was thought to resemble that of the Moon and was described in the Proclamation as "weird and scenic landscape peculiar to itself." The unusual scientific value of the expanded monument is the great diversity of exquisitely preserved volcanic features within a relatively small area. The expanded monument includes almost all the features of basaltic volcanism, including the craters, cones, lava flows, caves, and fissures of the 65-mile-long Great Rift, a geological feature that is comparable to the great rift zones of Iceland and Hawaii. It comprises the most diverse and geologically recent part of the lava terrain that covers the southern Snake River Plain, a broad lava plain made up of innumerable basalt lava flows that erupted during the past 5 million years.

Since 1924, the monument has been expanded and boundary adjustments made through four presidential proclamations issued pursuant to the Antiquities Act (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431). Presidential Proclamation 1843 of July 23, 1928, expanded the monument to include certain springs for water supply and additional features of scientific interest. Presidential Proclamation 1916 of July 9, 1930, Presidential Proclamation 2499 of July 18, 1941, and Presidential Proclamation 3506 of November 19, 1962, made further adjustments to the boundaries. In 1996, a minor boundary adjustment was made by section 205 of the Omnibus Parks