

right of free exercise of religion, subject to the constitutional limitation on establishment of religion and any other applicable law.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 23, 2002.

NOTE: H.R. 5010, approved October 23, was assigned Public Law No. 107-248.

Statement on Signing the Military Construction Appropriation Act, 2003

October 23, 2002

Today I have signed into law H.R. 5011, the “Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2003,” which provides \$10.5 billion for Department of Defense military construction and family housing programs. The Act ensures the Nation’s military construction priorities are met and provides the resources and infrastructure for our fighting forces at home and abroad. My Administration is committed to improving military housing and the quality of life of our uniformed defenders and their families, and this bill clearly reflects that commitment.

Sections 107, 110, and 113 of the Act provide for notice to the Congress of relocation of activities between military installations, initiation of a new installation abroad, or U.S. military exercises involving \$100,000 in construction costs. The U.S. Supreme Court has stated that the President’s authority to classify and control access to information bearing on national security flows from the Constitution and does not depend upon a legislative grant of authority. Although the notice can be provided in most situations as a matter of comity, situations may arise, especially in wartime, in which the President must act promptly under his constitutional grants of executive power and authority as Commander in Chief while protecting sensitive national security information. The executive branch shall construe these sections in a manner consistent with the President’s constitutional authority.

Section 119 provides for the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to the Congress with details of proposed actions to encourage

certain cooperating nations to assume a greater share of the common defense burden. The executive branch shall construe this provision in a manner consistent with the President’s constitutional authority to withhold information, the disclosure of which could impair foreign relations, the national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive’s constitutional duties. The Secretary of Defense will, of course, continue as a matter of comity to keep the Congress appropriately informed of the matters addressed by section 119.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 23, 2002.

NOTE: H.R. 5011, approved October 23, was assigned Public Law No. 107-249.

Remarks on Children’s Online Safety *October 23, 2002*

Thank you all for coming. Welcome to the White House. And thanks for the work that most of you do on behalf of protecting this country’s children. Because children are so vulnerable, they need the constant protection of adults. And because children are so vulnerable, they’re often the targets of cruel and ruthless criminals.

I am deeply saddened by the recent tragedy that we’ve seen here in Washington. There is a ruthless person on the loose. I’ve ordered the full resources of the Federal Government to help local law enforcement officials in their efforts to capture this person. Laura and I join our fellow Americans in prayer as we pray for the families and friends who have lost loved ones, as we pray for the safety of our fellow citizens, as we pray for the quick end to this period of violence and fear.

Protecting children from sexual exploitation is also a priority. It needs to be a priority and is a priority of this country. Earlier this month, I convened the first ever White House Conference on Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children. And those efforts continue today.