

VETO MESSAGE ON H.R. 2587,
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

THE VETO OF H.R. 2587, THE "DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000"



SEPTEMBER 29, 1999.—Message and accompanying papers referred to the
Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval, H.R. 2587, the "District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 2000." Although the bill provides important funding for the District of Columbia, I am vetoing this bill because it includes a number of highly objectionable provisions that are unwarranted intrusions into local citizens' decisions about local matters.

I commend the Congress for developing a bill that includes requested funding for the District of Columbia. The bill includes essential funding for District Courts and Corrections and the D.C. Offender Supervision Agency and goes a long way toward providing requested funds for a new tuition assistance program for District of Columbia residents. I appreciate the additional funding included in the bill to promote the adoption of children in the District's foster care system, to support the Children's National Medical Center, to assist the Metropolitan Police Department in eliminating open-air drug trafficking in the District, and for drug testing and treatment, among other programs.

However, I am disappointed that the Congress has added to the bill a number of highly objectionable provisions that would interfere with local decisions about local matters. Were it not for these provisions, I would sign the bill into law. Many of the Members who voted for this legislation represent States and localities that do not impose similar restrictions on their own citizens. I urge the Congress to remove the following provisions expeditiously to prevent the interruption of important funding for the District of Columbia:

- *Voting Representation.* H.R. 2587 would prohibit not only the use of Federal, but also District funds to provide assistance for petition drives or civil actions that seek to obtain voting representation in the Congress for residents of the District of Columbia.

- *Limit on Access to Representation in Special Education Cases.* The bill would cap the award of plaintiffs' attorneys' fees in cases brought by parents of District schoolchildren against the District of Columbia Public Schools under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In the long run, this provision would likely limit the access of the District's poor families to quality legal representation, thus impairing their due process protections provided by the IDEA.

- *Abortion.* The bill would prohibit the use of not only Federal, but also District funds to pay for abortions except in those cases where the life of the mother is endangered or in situations involving rape or incest.

- *Domestic Partners Act.* The bill would prohibit the use of not only Federal, but also District funds to implement or enforce the Health Care Benefits Expansion Act of 1992.

- *Needle Exchange Programs.* The bill contains a ban that would seriously disrupt current AIDS/HIV prevention efforts by prohibiting the use of Federal and local funds for needle exchange programs. H.R. 2587 denies not only Federal, but also District funding to any public or private agency, including providers of HIV/AIDS-related services, in the District of Columbia that uses the public or private agency's own funds for needle exchange programs, undermining the principle of home rule in the District.

- *Controlled Substances.* The bill would prohibit the District from legislating with respect to certain controlled substances, in a manner that all States are free to do.

- *Restriction on City Council Salaries.* The bill would limit the amount of salary that can be paid to members of the District of Columbia Council.

I urge the Congress to send me a bill that maintains the important funding for the District provided in this bill and that eliminates these highly objectionable provisions as well as other provisions that undermine the ability of residents of the District of Columbia to make decisions about local matters.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *September 28, 1999.*

