

Office of the White House Press Secretary
(Vail, Colorado)

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I am pleased to have signed H. R. 16424, a bill creating a temporary Commission on Federal Paperwork to study paperwork generated by various Government reporting requirements. To the public, the burden of filling out Government applications, reports, and other forms of various kinds are not pleasant, frequently annoying, sometimes overwhelming and often costly and time-consuming. To the Government, adequate information is vital if it is to have responsible policy-making and effective operation of agency activities.

For over 30 years, we have had a public policy of holding Government reporting and recordkeeping requirements to a minimum. These efforts have achieved substantial results, but have not stemmed the increasing tide of Government reporting requirements.

Two main features set the new Commission on Federal Paperwork apart from earlier attacks on the paperwork problem.

It has a broader scope. It will look at laws, regulations, rules, policies, procedures and practices relating to the gathering, processing, and dissemination of information as well as at the management and control of these activities.

No less important is the composition of the Commission. It brings together representatives of the legislative and executive branches of the Federal Government, representatives from State and local governments, and members from industry and the public. All are involved in the paperwork problem in one way or another. It is fitting that we all share the opportunity and responsibility of reexamining our present policies and procedures and recommending new ways to obtain more effectively the information the Government needs without unreasonably burdening the public.

I look forward to seeing the results of the Commission's work.

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- An increase of \$25.4 million will unnecessarily extend a nutrition program for the elderly when assistance is already available through existing programs: Food Stamps, Social Security, and Supplemental Security Income.
- The economic development assistance programs of the Department of Commerce are increased by \$11.2 million. This increase was partially offset by a \$3.5 million reduction in the regional development programs. The net increase of \$7.7 million will permit a wide range of economic adjustment assistance to States and communities.
- The Veterans Administration receives an additional \$10 million for assistance to health manpower training institutions to cover the growing numbers of grant applications they are receiving from schools presently authorized for this program.

In addition to the appropriation increases, language in the bill significantly increases spending in two other areas:

- The bill releases \$215 million for direct loans under the Housing for the Elderly or Handicapped program (Section 202) which has been inactive since 1970. The new lower income Housing Assistance program can meet elderly housing needs; making reactivation of the Section 202 program unnecessary and undesirable. This provision could increase 1975 outlays by \$10 million and 1976 outlays by \$105 million. While these outlays would be outside the budget, they would, nevertheless, generate additional pressures on Treasury borrowing.
- For grants for airport development, \$25 million appropriated in 1969 is made available for obligation through June 30, 1975, by the bill. This action increases 1975 outlays by \$5 million and 1976 outlays by \$15 million.

Major Decreases

- Reductions in amounts requested for the Atomic Energy Commission total \$38.4 million -- more than half of the total amount requested -- and include reductions of \$32 million for nuclear weapons testing associated with the Threshold Test Ban Treaty and \$6 million for the safeguards program. These reductions will: (1) require AEC and the Department of Defense to review the nuclear weapons testing program and determine what can be accomplished with the reduced funds and (2) delay the completion of planned improvements in transportation security for special nuclear materials.

(MORE)

- The \$14.9 million reduction for grants to the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (AMTRAK) is only a temporary cut. The funds eliminated from the bill will have to be restored at some later time.
- Congress reduced the \$850,000 request for expenses of the Presidential transition and allowances and staff for the former President to \$200,000.

Language Provisions

- Congress redistributed funds available from GSA's Federal Buildings Fund by increasing the amount available for space rental by \$14 million and reducing amounts available for purchase contract payments by \$10 million and for real property operations by \$3 million. These changes will have no impact on outlays.
- Congress added an across-the-board (the Legislative and Judicial Branches are included) limitation restricting agency obligations for travel to 90 percent of the 1975 budget estimates. The 90 percent rate is effective from the date of enactment of this bill rather than for the entire fiscal year. Approximately \$75 million will be cut out of agencies' budgets by this provision.
- The modified "Holt amendment" to the appropriation for elementary and secondary education prohibits the use of Federal funds appropriated under this bill to compel school systems to classify or assign teachers or students according to race, religion, sex, or national origin, "except as may be required to enforce nondiscrimination provisions of Federal law."
- Section 203 of the bill prohibits -- through June 30, 1975 -- using appropriations in the bill to transfer from Federal officials or agencies any of the "documents, written materials, or tape recordings" of the preceding President.

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