

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 12, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

MEMORANDUM OF DISAPPROVAL

I have withheld my approval from S. 3790, a private bill which would authorize a civil service survivor annuity retroactive to September 28, 1972, to Mrs. Camilla A. Hester as the widow of the late John A. Hester.

While I am sympathetic to Mrs. Hester's circumstances, S. 3790 unfortunately contains two precedent-setting provisions which I consider very undesirable, not only for future private relief legislation, but also for ordinary claims under the Civil Service Retirement System.

The first would require the Civil Service Commission to pay interest at 6 percent per annum retroactive to 1972 on the survivor's benefit which would be authorized by S. 3790. The second would require the Treasury to pay Mrs. Hester \$5,000 as compensation for her successful effort to be awarded the benefit. Neither of these provisions are appropriate, in my judgment, in bringing Mrs. Hester equitable relief.

For these reasons I am unable to approve S. 3790. I have signed other private relief legislation during the 94th Congress designed to rectify the inequitable circumstances arising from the "length of marriage" requirement in the civil service retirement law. However, these bills did not contain the objectionable provisions contained in S. 3790. I would be pleased, however, to consider legislation for Mrs. Hester that would provide appropriate relief without the objectionable features discussed above.

GERALD R. FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE,

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