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March 20, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I have signed into law S. 2017, amending the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972.

This legislation addresses one of the most serious problems our nation faces -- drug abuse. Drug abuse disrupts lives, causes victims and their families to suffer anguish and is a major contributor to our growing crime rate. The passage of S. 2017, by voice vote, in both Houses of the Congress gives emphasis to our national commitment to give priority to dealing with this important problem.

A critical aspect of the legislation is that it extends appropriation authorizations for Federally funded drug abuse prevention and treatment programs which, for the past eight months, have been funded under a continuing resolution. My approval of this bill will permit the appropriation of needed additional funds.

I thoroughly agree with the position of the Congress on the importance of a well coordinated Federal drug abuse program. I have consistently held, however, that such coordination can best be carried out by existing departments and agencies, without an additional agency for that purpose. I also agree that both the Congress and the President need to be kept informed about the problems and progress of this program. The best places to get such information and to seek accountability for progress are the departments and agencies which have direct responsibility and program authority. I intend to use the appropriate department and agency heads for such reporting.

Over the past several months, I have voiced strong opposition to the re-establishment of a special office for drug abuse in the White House. I believe that such an office would be duplicative and unnecessary and that it would detract from strong Cabinet management of the Federal drug abuse program. Therefore, while I am signing this bill because of the need for Federal funds for drug abuse prevention and treatment, I do not intend to seek appropriations for the new Office of Drug Abuse Policy created by the bill.

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