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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I have given my approval to S. 754, the so-called "Speedy Trial Act of 1974." I have done so, however, with some reservations.

I fully endorse the goal of speedy justice, but I am concerned about the sanctions imposed by the bill. If its time limits are not met, Section 3162 provides for dismissal of the indictment and permits the trial judge to decide whether a subsequent reindictment would be permitted. I believe that dismissal without precluding reindictment would constitute an ample sanction to insure that prompt trials do take place. I hope that the sound discretion of our Federal District Court judges will minimize the possibility that a defendant will be unnecessarily exonerated from punishment for a serious offense without ever having undergone a trial.

I also take this opportunity to call for prompt Congressional action on the recommendation of the Judicial Conference of the United States for the creation of 51 additional Federal District Court judgeships in 33 separate judicial districts across the country. This measure recognizes that justice delayed is too often justice denied. However, without a commitment to meet the increased demands which the bill will impose on our federal judiciary, as well as prosecutors, its benefits become transparent.

The Judicial Conference recommendation was advanced in 1972 and Senate hearings incorporating the proposal were conducted in 1973. To date, however, this legislation has not been scheduled for action. I hope that it will be a priority item for the 94th Congress.

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