

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I am today returning without my approval H.R. 5901, the Education Appropriation Act, 1976.

Throughout my public life, I have believed -- and still believe -- that education is one of the strong foundation stones of our Republic. But that is not the issue in this appropriation bill.

The real issue is whether we are going to impose fiscal discipline on ourselves or whether we are going to spend ourselves into fiscal insolvency. This is the first regular appropriation bill passed by the Congress this year. It would provide \$7.9 billion -- \$1.5 billion over the budget.

Earlier this year, I drew a line on the budget deficit for Fiscal Year 1976 at \$60 billion. Even that deficit is far too high. On May 14, the Congress drew its own line at the even higher deficit level of \$69 billion. Today, the Congress' own July 21 budget scorekeeping report estimates a possible deficit this year of over \$83.6 billion.

I cannot, in good conscience, support such a huge deficit. Nor can the people of this country afford the inflation that would inevitably result, this year, next year and the year after. Money appropriated by the Congress inevitably is taken from the people -- either through higher taxes, or by inflation, or both.

This appropriation bill is too much to ask the American people -- and our economy -- to bear. I urge the Members of the House and the Senate to sustain my veto of this bill and then we can work together -- as we have before -- to achieve a responsible compromise.

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