

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 25, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

I return without my approval H.R. 5901, the Education Division and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, 1976.

Throughout my public life, I believed -- and still believe -- that education is one of the 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 and it provides \$7.9 billion, \$1.5 billion more than I requested.

Earlier this year, I drew a line on the budget deficit for fiscal year 1976 at \$60 billion. That line is considerably higher than I would like. On May 14, the Congress drew its own line on the deficit at \$69 billion. But now, the Congress' own July 21 budget scorekeeping report estimates a possible deficit this year of \$83.6 billion.

I cannot, in good conscience, support such a deficit, not only because of what it means this year, but next year and the year after. In fact, if this bill were to become law, nearly \$1 billion would be added to next year's deficit.

While I do not insist that my original budget recommendation is the only one acceptable, I do believe major reductions must be made in this bill. The Congress could make a substantial move in that direction by simply accepting my recommendations for impact aid and higher education. In these two areas alone, Congress has added \$913 million to my proposals.

No single program is more bankrupt than the Impact Aid program. Starting with President Eisenhower, every Chief Executive has recommended reform or abolition of impact aid. Yet, the Congress would allocate three quarters of a billion dollars of the taxpayers' money to this program over the next 15 months. This program is a luxury we can no longer afford. If we are to do what must be done, we must stop doing what need not be done.

We must also avoid increasing the funding of other programs unless we have the money to pay for them. In that regard, I urge the Congress to reconsider the \$434 million added to my \$2 billion recommendation for higher education.

The other increases the Congress has added to this bill are a part of the trend over the past several years -- a little more for every program. In this case, "a little more" adds up to nearly \$629 million.

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Taken as a whole, this appropriation bill is too much to ask the taxpayers -- and our economy -- to bear.

I urge the Congress to sustain my veto of this bill and then we can work together -- as we have before -- to achieve a responsible compromise.

GERALD R. FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE,

July 25, 1975.

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