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Office of the White House Press Secretary
(Vail, Colorado)

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I have signed into law S. 409, the bill which extends the life of the Council on Wage and Price Stability to September 30, 1977. It also clarifies the Council's authority to participate in agency rulemaking and other proceedings where the inflationary impact of a possible action could be significant, and authorizes the Council to require periodic reports of information from the private sector.

Nearly a year ago, one of my first acts as President was to request legislation establishing the Council on Wage and Price Stability. I was pleased then that Congress acted in a swift and constructive way on this legislation, and I am equally pleased that Congress has extended the tenure of the Council to help in our battle against inflation. This law continues the Council in the role for which it was established: an alert watchdog against inflation.

The Council has sought both to inform and represent the public. It has spotlighted unjustifiable price increases in industry and has brought needed attention to the potentially inflationary consequences of government actions. In the most serious cases, it has intervened on behalf of the public, as a participant in government rulemaking.

I believe the Council performs an important role in assisting government agencies to analyze and understand the important and often overlooked impact of their rules and regulations. Every major government action adds new costs to some part of the economy. I am convinced that, through judicious use of its authority to participate in agency proceedings, the Council will be an important participant in my Administration's overall efforts to reduce both the scope and cost of government's interference in the economy.

I am concerned that Congress has given the Council new authority to require detailed and periodic reports from the private sector. While Congress has wisely mandated that any information pertaining to individual firms or persons must be held strictly confidential and that the authority should be used wisely, I feel strongly that abuse of this power would run counter to my belief that government reporting requirements have become a major burden to our privacy and freedom. I am confident that the Council will exercise this new authority with greatest care.

On balance, I believe this legislation ensures that the Council on Wage and Price Stability will continue as a strong force as it monitors, but does not control, the actions of private and public organizations. The Council will continue to be an important instrument in helping us achieve a speedy return to a healthy and prosperous economy.

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