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JANUARY 1, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I am pleased to sign H.R. 6461, the Public Broadcasting Financing Act of 1975. This legislation, while not perfect, represents a milestone in the history of public broadcasting. It will help assure that public broadcasting can concentrate on being the effective and innovative source of educational and cultural programming which the American people have come to expect.

I congratulate the Congress for including in this new legislation most of the provisions originally recommended by the Administration. Under the bill, the level of Federal funding will be keyed to the ability of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the local broadcasters themselves to generate contributions from other sources. In addition, a significant percentage of the Federal contribution to public broadcasting will be required by law to be distributed to local public broadcasting stations. Both of these features insure that the Federal commitment to public broadcasting will be dependent upon and responsive to the interests and needs of local audiences.

I am also pleased that the legislation provides for a five-year authorization. Multi-year financing for public broadcasting has been a long-sought objective as a means of insulating this important medium of expression from the possibility of undue governmental control.

I am disappointed, therefore, that the present bill does not include the corresponding five-year appropriation originally proposed by the Administration.

I am also concerned about the authorization ceilings contained in H.R. 6461. The bill proposed by the Administration contained funding ceilings for a five-year period ranging from \$70 million in the first year to \$100 million in the fifth year. Unfortunately, the Congress has increased these ceilings significantly, providing for a five-year authorization ranging from \$88 million to \$160 million. In this time of severe strain on the Federal budget, I consider it essential that the appropriations provided under this bill conform to the limits which I intend to recommend in my fiscal year 1977 budget.

In spite of the deficiencies I have mentioned, I believe the bill I have signed will significantly enhance the ability of the public broadcasting community to continue providing programming of excellence and diversity for the American people.

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