



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

July 23, 2003
(House Rules)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

(THIS STATEMENT HAS BEEN COORDINATED BY OMB WITH THE CONCERNED AGENCIES.)

H.R. 2765 – District of Columbia Appropriations Bill, FY 2004

(Sponsors: Young (R), Florida; Obey (D), Wisconsin)

The Administration supports House passage of the FY 2004 District of Columbia Appropriations Bill, as reported by the Appropriations Committee.

While this bill exceeds the President's request by \$45 million, the Administration applauds the Committee for reporting this bill in a timely manner and looks forward to working with the Congress to ensure that the FY 2004 appropriations bills ultimately fit within the top line funding level agreed to by both the Administration and the Congress. The President supports a discretionary spending total of \$784.7 billion, along with advance appropriations of \$23.2 billion for FY 2005 – in accordance with his Budget and the FY 2004 Congressional Budget Resolution. Only within such a fiscal environment can we encourage increased economic growth and a return to a balanced budget. The Administration looks forward to working with the Congress to ensure that its priorities are met within that overall total.

Additional Administration views regarding the Committee's version of the bill are:

School Choice Incentive Fund

The Administration is also pleased the Committee bill includes \$10 million for the President's School Choice Incentive Fund initiative. This program will help increase the capacity of the District to provide parents -- particularly low-income parents -- more options for obtaining a quality education for their children who are trapped in low-performing schools. The Administration understands that an amendment may be offered to fully implement this important initiative. The Administration strongly supports Congress' efforts to ensure that DC School Choice is available to children as quickly as possible.

Federal Funding for DC

The Administration is pleased that the Committee fully funds the President's request of \$164 million for the District of Columbia Courts and \$32 million for the Defender Services in the DC Courts, as well as the request of \$17 million for DC resident tuition support, \$15 million for emergency planning and security costs in the District, and \$1 million for the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

Attorney's Fees under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Administration is pleased that the Committee has retained the provision that caps the award of plaintiffs' attorneys' fees in cases brought against the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) under IDEA. The Administration strongly supports the education of our children, including those with disabilities according to the principles embodied in IDEA. We believe it is in the best interest of the District's children if DCPS uses its limited resources to improve its special education programs, rather than pay excessive attorneys' fees.

Suit Against Gun Manufacturers

The Administration supports Section 135 that would prohibit the use of funds in the DC appropriations bill from being used to fund or otherwise support the action of *District of Columbia, et al., v. Beretta U.S.A. et al.*

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