

**VALELLY TASK 8:**  
Presidents' statements on  
extensions of Voting Rights Act  
Nixon (1970), Ford (1975), Reagan (1982)

Reference:

Nixon: PUBLIC PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES: RICHARD NIXON, 1970, P. 512-513  
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, FIRESTONE LIBRARY, 1066.922.7

Ford: WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, GERALD FORD, VOL. 11, JULY-DECEMBER 1975, P. 837  
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, FIRESTONE LIBRARY, 1066.9595

Reagan: WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, RONALD REAGAN, VOL. 18, NO. 26-38, 1982, P. 846-847  
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, FIRESTONE LIBRARY, 1066.9595)

THIS PACKET CONTAINS STATEMENTS FROM PRESIDENTS NIXON, FORD, AND REAGAN FOLLOWING THE SIGNING OF LEGISLATION TO EXTEND THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT IN 1970, 1975, AND 1982, RESPECTIVELY.

NIXON

Packet pages 2-3, Book pages 512-513

FORD

Packet pages 4, Book pages 837

REAGAN

Packet pages 5-6, Book pages 846-847

tions, the committee sought and weighed the views of interested parties from within and without the aviation industry, including carrier and airport officials, shippers, consumers' representatives, and governmental authorities from all levels.

I have now received and studied the report of that committee, in the form of a Statement of International Air Transportation Policy. This statement confirms that many of our past guidelines are still useful and relevant. In other cases, to meet current and foreseeable problems, new approaches have been proposed. The policy is carefully framed to conserve the opportunities of all carriers for continued growth. It is directed realistically at making a new variety of services available to passengers and shippers. It recognizes that our international air services, by their very nature, must be organized on the basis of cooperation with other nations.

In my judgment, the statement sets forth a soundly balanced policy for the future. Accordingly, I have approved it to supersede the statement of international air transport policy adopted in 1963. I am directing that this new statement of policy guidance be used henceforth by responsible officials of the Government in dealing with international aviation problems.

NOTE: The full text of the "Statement of International Air Transportation Policy" was made available with the President's statement.

On the same day, the White House Press Office released a summary of the policy statement's conclusions, which is printed in the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (vol. 6, p. 804), and the transcript of a news briefing on the policy by John A. Volpe, Secretary of Transportation, and Dr. Paul W. Cherington, Chairman of the Committee that prepared the "Statement of International Air Transportation Policy."

## 196 Statement on Signing the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1970. *June 22, 1970*

ON WEDNESDAY, Congress completed action on a bill extending and amending the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and sent it to me for signature. As passed, the bill contained a "rider" which I believe to be unconstitutional: a provision lowering the voting age to 18 in Federal, State, and local elections. Although I strongly favor the 18-year-old vote, I believe—along with most of the Nation's leading constitutional scholars—that Congress has no power to enact it by simple statute, but rather it requires a constitutional amendment.

Despite my misgivings about the constitutionality of this one provision, I have today signed the bill. I have directed the

Attorney General to cooperate fully in expediting a swift court test of the constitutionality of the 18-year-old provision.

An early test is essential because of the confusion and uncertainty surrounding an act of doubtful constitutionality that purports to extend the franchise. Until this uncertainty is resolved, any elections—including primary elections and even local referenda on such questions as school bond issues—could have their results clouded by legal doubt.

If I were to veto, I would have to veto the entire bill—voting rights and all. If the courts hold the voting-age provisions unconstitutional, however, only that one section of the act will be affected. Be-

cause the basic provisions of this act are of great importance, therefore, I am giving it my approval and leaving the decision on the disputed provision to what I hope will be a swift resolution by the courts.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 has opened participation in the political process. Although this bill does not include all of the administration's recommendations, it does incorporate improvements which extend its reach still further, suspending literacy tests nationwide and also putting an end to the present welter of State residency requirements for voting for President and Vice President. Now, for the first time, citizens who move between elections may vote without long residency requirements.

In the 5 years since its enactment, close to 1 million Negroes have been registered to vote for the first time and more than 400 Negro officials have been elected to local and State offices. These are more than election statistics; they are statistics of hope and dramatic evidence that the

American system works. They stand as an answer to those who claim that there is no recourse except to the streets.

The time has also come to give 18-year-olds the vote, as I have long urged. The way to do this is by amending the Constitution. Because of the likelihood that the 18-year-old vote provision of this law will not survive its court test, the constitutional amendment pending before the Congress should go forward to the States for ratification now.

I therefore call upon the Congress to act now upon the constitutional amendment to avoid undue delay in its approval by the States should this provision of the new law be held unconstitutional.

NOTE: As enacted, the bill (H.R. 4249) is Public Law 91-285 (84 Stat. 314).

On the same day, the White House released the transcript of a news briefing on the statement by Leonard Garment, Special Consultant to the President.

On December 21, 1970, in *Oregon v. Mitchell* and related cases (400 U.S. 112) the Supreme Court held the 18-year-old vote provisions of the act unconstitutional with respect to State and local elections.

## 197 Veto of the Medical Facilities Construction and Modernization Amendments of 1970.

June 22, 1970

*To the House of Representatives:*

I am returning without my approval H.R. 11102, the Medical Facilities Construction and Modernization Amendments of 1970. My reason for this veto is basic: H.R. 11102 is a long step down the road of fiscal irresponsibility, and we should not take that road.

This bill authorizes direct grants which are more than \$350 million in excess of the budget which I presented to the Congress for Fiscal Year 1971. More than

that it would 1) significantly restrict Presidential options in managing Federal expenditures, 2) isolate the financing of one group of Federal programs as untouchable without assessing its merits against the financial needs for other programs, and 3) encourage pressures to extend this provision to other areas—thereby further complicating management of the Federal budget.

One of the most unacceptable provisions of the bill is in Section 601. Here, the

ted in me by the Constitution and statutes, including section 255(b) of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 (19 U.S.C. 1885(b)) do hereby proclaim that:

1) So much of Proclamation No. 4335 as proclaimed temporary quantitative limitations on the importation into the United States of certain cattle, swine, and pork from Canada is terminated.

2) Subpart B of part 2 of the Appendix to the TSUS is amended as follows:

(a) By deleting from the superior heading immediately preceding item 945.01 the following:

(i) "the cattle, the swine,"

(ii) ", or the pork"

(iii) "cattle, swine,"

(iv) "or pork, respectively,"

(b) By deleting items 945.01, 945.02, and 945.04.

3) This Proclamation is effective with respect to articles entered, or withdrawn from warehouse, for consumption after 12:01 a.m., EDT, August 7, 1975.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of August, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and seventy-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two-hundredth.

GERALD R. FORD

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 3:04 p.m., August 6, 1975]

## Voting Rights Act Extension

*The President's Remarks Upon Signing H.R. 6219 Into Law in a Ceremony in the Rose Garden. August 6, 1975*

*Mr. Vice President, distinguished Members of the Congress, and other distinguished guests:*

I am very pleased to sign today H.R. 6219, which extends as well as broadens the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The right to vote is at the very foundation of our American system, and nothing must interfere with this very precious right. Today is the 10th anniversary of the signing by President Johnson of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which I supported as a Member of the House of Representatives.

In the past decade, the voting rights of millions and millions of Americans have been protected and our system of government has been strengthened immeasurably. The bill that I will sign today extends the temporary provisions of the act for 7 more years and broadens the provisions to bar discrimination against Spanish-speaking Americans, American Indians, Alaskan natives, and Asian Americans.

Further, this bill will permit private citizens, as well as the Attorney General, to initiate suits to protect the voting rights of citizens in any State where discrimination occurs. There must be no question whatsoever about the right of each eligible American, each eligible citizen to participate in our elective process. The extension of this act will help to ensure that right.

I thank the Members of the Congress, I thank their staffs, and I thank all the others who have been helpful in making this signing possible.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:09 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

As enacted, the bill (H.R. 6219) is Public Law 94-73, approved August 6, 1975.

## Veterans Disability Compensation and Survivor Benefits Act of 1975

*Statement by the President on Signing the Bill Into Law. August 6, 1975*

I have approved H.R. 7767, a bill to raise compensation payments for service-disabled veterans and their survivors.

Early this year, I called for a temporary 5 percent limit on cost-of-living increases in certain domestic benefit programs to slow the growth in Federal spending for these programs. I proposed that this limit be applied to veterans and survivor compensation as well as to other Federal programs. The limit I recommended would not have reduced or eliminated any benefit payments, but would have slowed the excessive growth of the budget and given us some control over spending in coming years. I still believe this is sound policy in our present economic climate.

The Congress refused to go along, however, and other groups have received Federal benefit increases exceeding my proposed limit. Therefore, it would not be equitable to apply this limit only to veterans disabled in the service of their country and to their survivors. The Nation owes them a *special* debt of gratitude.

H.R. 7767 will cost the Federal Government one-half billion dollars a year. In the current fiscal year, this is more than double the cost of a 5-percent benefit increase.

I must, therefore, remind the Congress that we simply cannot continue adding to Federal deficit spending without facing a day of reckoning.

My pledge still stands to do all in my power to hold this year's budget deficit to \$60 billion. I urge the Congress to hold spending in future legislation to the limits proposed in my 1976 budget requests and to find sufficient savings in other programs to make up for the added spending called for in H.R. 7767.

NOTE: As enacted, the bill (H.R. 7767) is Public Law 94-71, approved August 5, 1975.

must learn from the shortcomings of earlier efforts for, as you are well aware, the American people will not accept an agreement unless it is equal and verifiable, and contributes to stability.

The proposals you take to Geneva represent a practical, phased plan which will protect the legitimate security interests of both sides. It is designed to enhance deterrence and to achieve stability by reducing nuclear forces on both sides to equal levels in a verifiable manner. Its provisions significantly reduce the forces of both the Soviet Union and the United States and, therefore, contain benefits for both sides, as well as for the rest of the world.

I know that you and your delegation will present these proposals clearly and persuasively, along with the fundamental considerations that lie behind them. And, I want the Soviet delegation to know that concerns and proposals put forward by them will be given careful consideration by us. For our part, the United States is ready to move forward rapidly toward an agreement reducing strategic nuclear arms, and I am confident that if our efforts are met with the same seriousness of purpose by the Soviet Union, we can seize the historic opportunity that lies before us.

As the two leading nuclear powers in the world, the United States and the Soviet Union are trustees for humanity in the great task of ending the menace of nuclear arsenals and transforming them into instruments underwriting peace. I am convinced that this can be done if both nations fully accept the principle that the only legitimate function of nuclear arms is to deter aggression.

I wish you Godspeed in your efforts, and assure you that these negotiations will have personal attention.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

## Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1982

*Remarks on Signing H.R. 3112 Into Law.  
June 29, 1982*

Well, I am pleased today to sign the legislation extending the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Citizens must have complete confidence in the sanctity of their right to vote, and that's what this legislation is all about. It provides confidence that constitutional guarantees are being upheld and that no vote counts more than another. To so many of our people—our Americans of Mexican descent, our black Americans—this measure is as important symbolically as it is practically. It says to every individual, "Your vote is equal; your vote is meaningful; your vote is your constitutional right."

I've pledged that as long as I'm in a position to uphold the Constitution, no barrier will come between our citizens and the voting booth. And this bill is a vital part of fulfilling that pledge.

This act ensures equal access to the political process for all our citizens. It securely protects the right to vote while strengthening the safeguards against representation by forced quota. The legislation also extends those special provisions applicable to certain States and localities, while at the same time providing an opportunity for the jurisdictions to bail out from the special provisions when appropriate. In addition, the bill extends for 10 years the protections for language minorities.

President Eisenhower said, "The future of the Republic is in the hands of the American voter." Well, with this law, we make sure the vote stays in the hands of every American.

Let me say how grateful I am to these gentlemen up here, the Members of the House and Senate from both sides of the aisle, and particularly those on the Senate Judiciary Committee, for getting this bipartisan legislation to my desk.

Yes, there are differences over how to attain the equality we seek for all our people. And sometimes amidst all the overblown rhetoric, the differences tend to seem bigger than they are. But actions speak louder than words. This legislation proves our unbending commitment to voting rights. It also proves that differences can be settled in a spirit of good will and good faith.

In this connection, let me also thank all the other organizations and individuals—

many who are here today—who worked for this bill. As I've said before, the right to vote is the crown jewel of American liberties, and we will not see its luster diminished.

The legislation that I'm signing is the longest extension of the act since its enactment and demonstrates America's commitment to preserving this essential right. I'm proud of the Congress for passing this legislation. I'm proud to be able to sign it.

And without saying anything further, I'm going to do that right now.

[At this point, the President signed the bill.]

It's done.

*Note: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. at the signing ceremony in the East Room at the White House.*

*As enacted, H.R. 3112 is Public Law 97-205, approved June 29.*

## United States Humanitarian Assistance for Lebanon

*Statement on Signing H.R. 6631 Into Law, June 30, 1982*

I am signing into law today H.R. 6631, a bill which authorizes emergency humanitarian assistance to the unfortunate victims of the hostilities in Lebanon. Providing help to people in need is a tradition in which the American people should take great pride. The suffering in Lebanon continues to mount even as an international humanitarian effort, of which the United States is a part, attempts to aid the hurt, hungry, and homeless people in Lebanon.

I am grateful to the Congress for acting so quickly to authorize assistance for Lebanon, and hope that it will soon make available the \$20 million I requested on June 16 for the relief effort. In the meantime, I have authorized the use of \$2 million from the Refugee Emergency Fund, and the State Department is reprogramming another \$10 million of appropriated funds to meet the most urgent relief needs. As the full

impact of this tragedy becomes known, the United States will continue to do its share in the international effort to relieve the suffering of the people in Lebanon.

*Note: As enacted, H.R. 6631 is Public Law 97-208, approved June 30.*

## National NCO/Petty Officer Week, 1982

*Proclamation 4950. June 30, 1982*

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

Time has not altered the basic duties and responsibilities of the majority of our Armed Forces personnel since the very foundation of our country was laid in 1776. For more than two hundred years, the American men and women who have so proudly served—and are currently serving—as Noncommissioned Officers and Petty Officers have been regarded as the backbone of the Armed Forces of the United States.

We all should recognize the great sacrifices and significant contributions made to the Nation by our fellow citizens whose traditional role of service to the Nation as soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guardsmen is older than the Nation itself. Their spirit and devotion to duty is evident in the long list of recipients of the Medal of Honor and other decorations of personal valor. They are the heart of our Armed Forces which sustain our freedom and way of life. The duties they perform in accomplishing their mission are a necessary and permanent part of this country's defense mechanism. Upon their shoulders lies the defense of our Nation.

By House Joint Resolution 518, the Congress has designated the week commencing with the fourth Monday in June 1982, as "National NCO/Petty Officer Week."

Now, Therefore, I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week commencing with the fourth Monday in June 1982 as