
EMPLOYMENT AND MANPOWER ACT OF 1970—VETO
MESSAGE

M E S S A G E

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

RETURNING

WITHOUT APPROVAL THE BILL (S. 3867) ENTITLED "AN ACT TO ASSURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING TO UNEMPLOYED AND UNDEREMPLOYED PERSONS, TO ASSIST STATES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN PROVIDING NEEDED PUBLIC SERVICES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

DECEMBER 21 (legislative day, DECEMBER 15), 1970.—Read and ordered to be printed

To the Senate of the United States:

It is with reluctance that I return to the Congress without my approval the Employment and Manpower Act of 1970. Despite concerted efforts made by the administration to achieve constructive legislation, the bill sent to me for signature does not achieve the reforms necessary to establish a manpower program that will serve the needs of the nation or the individual job seeker. I cannot accept this legislation which only perpetuates and extends the deficiencies in our manpower programs.

This administration sent a manpower reform proposal to the Congress in August of 1969. That bill would have pulled together the present unrelated, narrowly targeted manpower training programs and would have made it possible for State and local governments to develop comprehensive programs that are closely adjusted to the needs of local communities and the individual worker. It would have reformed the present program structure which has proven to be almost impossible for communities to understand or to administer effectively.

The House of Representatives passed a bill which adopted many of the structural reform features I felt to be essential. It would have permitted the flexible use of manpower funds in the light of local requirements. It would have afforded the cities and States a responsible role in the planning and administration of manpower programs. In addition, the House-passed bill provided for transitional public employment that would be linked to training and other efforts to expand job opportunities in the labor market at large. Despite reservations about some of the House's bill provisions, this administration endorsed it, and I would have signed it.

The Senate adopted a bill which we found completely unacceptable because it ignored the lessons of the last decade and would create a national manpower program that would relegate large numbers of workers to permanent, subsidized employment. Such a program would limit, not expand individual opportunity. The administration vigorously expressed its view on the Senate bill on several occasions. The outcome of the Conference—unfortunately for the nation—reflects what one leading House conferee has called “a near abandonment of the House-approved bill and a complete abandonment of crucial principles relating to the public service employment provisions.”

The Conference bill provides that as much as 44 percent of the total funding in the bill go for dead-end jobs in the public sector. Moreover, there is no requirement that these public sector jobs be linked to training or the prospect of other employment opportunities. W.P.A.-type jobs are not the answer for the men and women who have them, for government which is less efficient as a result, or for the taxpayers who must foot the bill. Such a program represents a reversion to the remedies that were tried thirty-five years ago. Surely it is an inappropriate and ineffective response to the problems of the seventies.

The Conference bill raises the number of narrow purpose program categories from 14 to 22, whereas the administration's proposal would have established a single, broadly defined manpower program. These narrow categorical programs would continue to hamstring the efforts of communities to adjust to change in their local needs. In dealing with manpower problems, the Federal Government should help, but it should not always prescribe.

I said at my news conference last week that I believe our economic policies are working. Inflation is receding. The economy is moving up. I am not satisfied with the present overall unemployment rate, (5.8 percent) even though the unemployment rate for the heads of families is much lower (3 percent). The Administration is taking measures to expand economic activity and job opportunities. Our main objective is to achieve a stable growth while actively reducing unemployment.

Transitional and short-term public service employment can be a useful component of the nation's manpower policies. This administration agreed to such a program provision in the House-passed bill and, in fact, this Administration has initiated a similar public service careers program under existing law. But public employment that is not linked to real jobs, or which does not try to equip the individual for changes in the labor market, is not a solution. I cannot accept a bill which so fully embraces this self-defeating concept.

The manpower reform bill which this administration sent to the Congress is one of three key parts in a program of fundamental reform. The other aspects are revenue sharing and reform of the welfare system. To date the Congress has completed action on only the manpower part of that program, and has done so in a way that will only make the situation worse.

Today, I reaffirm my administration's intention to continue pressing with all the resources at our command for all aspects of the reform program we have proposed—the Family Assistance Plan, revenue sharing and sound manpower reform. The next opportunity for action on this program will come very soon in the Senate, in the vote on the Family Assistance Plan. Once again, I urge the Senate to approve without further delay this long overdue reform.

RICHARD NIXON.

The WHITE HOUSE, *December 16, 1970.*

S. 3867

Ninety-first Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the nineteenth day of January, one thousand nine hundred and seventy

An Act

To assure opportunities for employment and training to unemployed and underemployed persons, to assist States and local communities in providing needed public services, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as "The Employment and Manpower Act".

STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

SEC. 2. The Congress finds and declares that—

(a) To attain the objective of the Employment Act of 1946 "to promote maximum employment, production and purchasing power" we must assure an opportunity for a gainful, productive job to every