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## STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT ON SIGNING THE EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1946

I have signed today the Employment Act of 1946. On this occasion it is worth pausing a moment to appraise this legislation in its broad historical perspective.

In enacting this legislation the Congress and the President are responding to an overwhelming demand of the people. This popular demand is more than a passing whim. The legislation gives expression to a deep-seated desire for a conscious and positive attack upon the perennial problems of mass unemployment and ruinous depression.

Within three years after the First World War, we experienced farm foreclosures, business failures, and mass unemployment. In fact, the history of the last several decades has been one of speculative booms alternating with deep depression. The people have found themselves defenseless in the face of economic forces beyond their control.

Similar experiences in other countries where democracy was less deeply rooted led to despair and the surrender of freedom. In this country a large majority of the people prefer to live and work under free competitive enterprise.

The people insist, however, that democratic government has the responsibility to use all its resources to create and maintain conditions under which free competitive enterprise can operate effectively—conditions under which there is an abundance of employment opportunity for those who are able, willing, and seeking to work.

In accepting this concept of the government's responsibility, the people do not believe that it is the government's duty to supplant the efforts of private enterprise to find markets or of individuals to find jobs. The people do expect the government to create and maintain conditions in which the individual businessman and the individual job seeker have a chance to succeed by their own efforts. That is the objective of the Employment Act of 1946.

The major provisions of this important legislation can be briefly summarized.

1. The Act declares that it is "the continuing policy and responsibility of the Federal Government . . . to coordinate and utilize all its plans, functions, and resources for the purpose of creating and maintaining conditions under which there will be afforded useful employment opportunities

including self-employment, for those able, willing, and seeking to work..." As Senator Murray said in his excellent statement of February 8, 1946, on the floor of the Senate: "Instead of using the words 'full employment' the bill uses the accepted definition of full employment." The Congress by this declaration has accepted a great responsibility, a responsibility so great that some members of the Congress hesitated to accept it. This hesitation has affected the language of the Act in its final form but not its substance. It does lay down an unmistakable policy and it provides a procedure for reaching our employment goals.

2. The Congress has placed on the President the duty of formulating programs designed to accomplish the purpose of the Act. In signing this Act, I accept this responsibility, which I believe is in line with the responsibility placed on the President by the Constitution. This task is so great that I can perform it only with the full and unqualified cooperation of all who are sincerely interested in the general welfare inside and outside the government. Making this Act work must become one of the prime objectives of all of us: citizens generally, industry, labor, and agriculture, State and local governments, and the Federal Government.

3. The Act includes a significant provision that will facilitate cooperation between the Executive and the Congress in the formulation of policies and programs to accomplish the objectives of the Act. It establishes a joint Congressional Committee consisting of seven Members of the Senate and seven Members of the House. This committee is given an assignment of great scope and the highest importance. The success or failure of the Act will be determined largely by the success or failure of the Joint Committee.

4. The Act establishes in the Executive Office of the President a Council of Economic Advisers, composed of three members to be appointed by the President with the consent of the Senate. The new Council will be an important addition to the facilities available for preparing economic policies and programs. In carrying on this work, I expect the fullest cooperation between the Council, the Cabinet, and the several divisions of the Executive Office.

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I am happy that the Senate adopted this legislation unanimously, the House of Representatives by a large majority. The result is not all I had hoped for, but I congratulate Members of both Houses and their leaders upon their constructive and fruitful efforts.

The Employment Act of 1946 is not the end of the road, but rather the beginning. It is a commitment by the government to the people—a commitment to take any and all of the measures necessary for a healthy economy, one that provides opportunities for those able, willing, and seeking to work.

We shall honor that commitment. The Employment Act of 1946 is a signal event on our journey forward.