

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am pleased to transmit a legislative proposal that if adopted would cure critical defects in the Civil Rights Act of 1990, a bill which, in its current form, S. 2104, I am compelled to veto.

As presented to me, S. 2104 would lead employers to adopt quotas for hiring and promotion, and it would prevent or discourage some victims of illegal quotas from seeking legal redress. The harm this would do to the cause of civil rights is potentially profound. Any measure that causes employment decisions to turn on factors of race, sex, ethnicity, or religion -- rather than on qualifications -- is fundamentally unfair, and is at odds with our civil rights tradition. Our war against discrimination is impeded, not advanced, by a bill that encourages the adoption of quotas.

On Monday, I will return S. 2104 to the Senate, along with my objections. It is my hope that the Congress will immediately forward to me a corrected bill for consideration. We cannot shrink from our national commitment to equal protection under the law and equal opportunity for all. Unaltered, S. 2104 would violate that pledge. With the changes that I propose, the Civil Rights Act of 1990 would no longer result in the imposition of quotas, but would be made a true civil rights bill that I would like to see become law.

With the legislative proposal, I also transmit a section-by-section analysis explaining the need for these changes and describing the Civil Rights Act of 1990 as amended by my proposal. I urge speedy action on this measure and hope that it will be adopted so that we may take another step in defending the civil rights of all Americans.



THE WHITE HOUSE,

October 20, 1990.