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Bush Administration Reduces Paperwork for Veterans, Students, and Taxpayers

Zero Tolerance Policy on Violations Pays Off

Washington, D.C. – Agencies saved Americans two million hours of paperwork last year by simplifying forms for veterans, students, taxpayers, companies and individuals, the Bush Administration announced today. A copy of the report detailing agency success can be viewed at:

http://www.omb.gov/infoereg/2003_info_coll_dism.pdf

“The last thing a veteran in need of medical care should be told is to fill out an unnecessary form. Taxpayers work hard for the services their government provides and should not have to spend extra time complying with useless paperwork, and no citizen should spend a moment on a government survey that has not been officially approved. I am pleased to say that the Bush Administration has made great progress ensuring that all paperwork is simple and necessary,” said Dr. John D. Graham, Administrator of OMB’s Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA).

Highlights of agency action to reduce the paperwork burden of citizens include:

- The Department of Treasury saved taxpayers 26 million hours by replacing the Employee Benefit Plan forms with streamlined versions that can be filed electronically.
- The Department of Education saved students more than one million hours by permitting students to sign a promissory note once every ten years, rather than annually.
- In 2003, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) combined several health care benefits forms into one, saving veterans more than 500,000 hours.
- **E-Government progress:** Using the power of the Internet, which allows forms to be filled out and filed with the click of a mouse, VA is working on giving veterans the ability to apply for disability insurance and designate their beneficiaries electronically by June 30, 2003.

Agency success in reducing the paperwork burden has added significance because the overall paperwork burden on the public increased from 7.65 billion hours in 2001 to 8.22 billion hours in 2002, as a result of new paperwork requests required by statute and population growth, which increases the number of citizens required to comply with government paperwork, raising the overall burden. Paperwork resulting from activities directly under the control of agencies fell by two million hours in 2002.

In addition to reducing their paperwork burden, agencies reported a 55 percent reduction in their Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) violations in 2002. According to PRA, agencies are in violation when they request information from the public without receiving OMB approval. In November, 2001, Dr. Graham established the Administration’s zero tolerance policy toward paperwork violations. Prior to the zero tolerance policy, there were 191 unresolved paperwork violations. Currently, there are only 62 unresolved violations, all of which are in the process of being resolved.

For more information, please contact OMB Communications at 202-395-7254 or visit our Web site at www.omb.gov.

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