

## Statement on the Farm Bill

March 22, 1996

I have reviewed the work of the conferees on the farm bill. While I strongly favor some aspects of the final bill, I have very serious reservations about it.

However, farmers need to know the conditions under which they are operating as they head out into their fields in the coming weeks, and the hour is growing late. For that reason, I will, with some reluctance, sign this bill when Congress presents it to me. Let me be clear: I am firmly committed to working with Congress next year to strengthen the farm safety net, and I plan to propose legislation to do so.

I am especially disappointed that the bill does not provide as strong a safety net for family farmers as it should. It provides fixed payments without regard to whether farmers are receiving adequate income from the market, yet leaves

farmers without protection in the event of natural disasters or other circumstances that sharply reduce their income.

I am pleased that the bill provides significant funds for conservation and environmental enhancement programs and that it will channel additional needed funds to rural development and agricultural research programs through the Fund for Rural America. The bill also reauthorizes nutrition programs for another 2 years and gives farmers the planting flexibility they need to plant for the market, not for Government programs.

I look forward to working with Congress next year in a process that involves all interested groups to make this a truly farmer-friendly farm bill.

## Statement on Signing the Eleventh Continuing Resolution

March 22, 1996

Today I have signed into law H.J. Res. 165, the eleventh continuing resolution for fiscal 1996.

House Joint Resolution 165 provides for a temporary extension of appropriations—March 23 through March 29—for activities funded in four of the five appropriations bills that have not been enacted into law. For AFDC/Foster Care, funding is provided through April 3 to avoid disruption of payments to States, which are normally made on the first of each month. The District of Columbia receives no new Federal funds, but retains authority to use local funds.

The reason that I must sign yet another continuing resolution is that the Congress still has not passed five of this year's appropriations bills in acceptable form. If I do not sign this measure the Government will shut down for a third time.

Six months through the fiscal year, almost three-quarters of the nondefense budget of the Federal Government is being provided through this continuing resolution rather than through

enactment of freestanding appropriations bills. For the sake of school districts and others who depend on these funds, this cannot continue. As we work to balance the budget and control discretionary spending, we must protect our Nation's investments in education, the environment, law enforcement, and technology.

Therefore, I urge the Congress to send me legislation for the remaining fiscal 1996 appropriations bills in acceptable form, and to do so before it adjourns for the Easter recess. We must work to resolve our differences over this legislation. I am committed to doing so.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

March 22, 1996.

NOTE: H.J. Res. 165, approved March 22, was assigned Public Law No. 104-118.