

Statement on Assistance for Livestock Producers

July 1, 1996

Our Nation's livestock producers are hurting. A severe drought in the Southwest has reduced available forage in pastures while raising the cost of cattle feed. Producers also have been hurt by low beef prices.

I am taking action today to help livestock producers weather these tough times. Specifically, I am declaring a State of Emergency in the Southwest and other areas, enabling the Secretary of Agriculture to release about \$40 million in needed assistance to producers from the Feed Grain Disaster Reserve.

The Department of Agriculture will sell about 15 million bushels of grain from the Disaster Reserve, in order to make disaster assistance payments to livestock producers in the drought

region. The Department will make the sales in a way that minimizes market disruptions.

Secretary Glickman and Deputy Secretary Rominger recently visited some of the areas hardest hit by the drought, and I have heard from Members of Congress and others about the situation there. I know how badly producers are suffering, and I am determined to do whatever I can to help.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: The proclamation on the declaration of a state of emergency and release of feed grain from the disaster reserve is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Assistance for Livestock Producers

July 1, 1996

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Today, I have proclaimed a State of Emergency due to the extended drought in the Southwest, and other natural disasters in feed grain-producing areas of the United States. The proclamation of a State of Emergency will permit the Secretary of Agriculture ("Secretary") to release feed grain supplies from the Disaster Reserve to assist livestock producers that have been greatly harmed by the drought. The Secretary has prepared a plan that would implement the

disposition of the feed grain supplies from the Disaster Reserve.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. The proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Announcing Emergency Action To Prevent Church Burnings

July 2, 1996

Good morning. I'd like to begin today by saluting the law enforcement officers who made the arrest in Arizona yesterday to avert a terrible

terrorist attack. Their dedication and hard work over the last 6 months may have saved many lives, and they deserve our thanks. I'd like to

offer a special congratulations to the gentleman to my right, Ray Kelly, the Under Secretary of the Treasury for Enforcement, for his role in that endeavor.

Just as we acted to prevent a vicious crime from occurring there, today I'm announcing stepped up efforts to prevent the spread of violence against houses of worship. Again, I want to thank Mr. Kelly and Nancy Gist, the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, who is standing to my left, the representatives of the law enforcement organizations who are here and who have been supporting our efforts.

These attacks against African-American churches and other houses of worship are an affront to our most basic beliefs of religious liberty and racial tolerance. They pose a challenge to our entire Nation. I am gratified that law enforcement, government, business, and religious leaders are coming together to meet this challenge. Today attorneys general from throughout our Nation are meeting at Howard University to discuss the problem.

I am also pleased that Congress acted quickly to pass legislation making it easier to prosecute and punish anyone who burns a house of worship, and I am eager to sign that legislation as soon as possible. I'm gratified by the outpouring of private support that will help to rebuild communities that are torn apart by these actions.

But we must do more to prevent these crimes. Last week I asked Federal emergency management administrator James Lee Witt to take the lead in working with law enforcement to find ways to stop the burnings before they happen and to give our communities the tools they need to help in the prevention effort.

Today I am taking emergency action to prevent church burnings by transferring \$6 million to communities in 12 targeted States. This emergency transfer would allow every county in the affected States to hire a new police officer for the summer to patrol the back roads, to visit the churches, to keep watch for signs of trouble.

These new officers, working with local police and community watch groups, can maintain a

wall of protection to ward off people who would strike out in hate at a house of worship. Or communities can spend the money for other purposes, installing floodlights, hiring private security guards, paying overtime for existing officers, whatever they believe will work best to forestall the fires.

I'm asking Congress to quickly approve the transfer through a special procedure that allows action without a time-consuming floor vote. We don't have any time to waste. With this step, the National Government will be helping local police not only to investigate arson and apprehend the guilty but to help to physically protect churches from harm in the first place.

If this emergency measure is not enough to beat back the church burnings, we will take further steps as needed. This is a struggle against racism and religious bigotry, and we will escalate that struggle as necessary with enough people power and willpower to make sure the struggle is won. This is a test not just for law enforcement but for all law-abiding Americans.

Earlier today I signed a proclamation designating a National Month of Unity. During the month of July, I call on religious leaders of all faiths to speak from the pulpit and emphasize the need for healing. And I call on all citizens to join together, to reach out to one another, to strengthen the ideals that light our way and keep us strong.

On Thursday we will celebrate America's Independence Day. This year, let us take this opportunity to rededicate ourselves once again to the proposition that all Americans are created equal and that every American should be able to worship in freedom and freedom from fear.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:39 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. H.R. 3525, the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996, approved July 3, was assigned Public Law No. 104-155. The National Month of Unity proclamation of July 1 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.