

have anything to do with the policy position. That's how I think it ought to be analyzed.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. During the exchange, a reporter referred to President Jacques Chirac of France, and the President referred to Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin of Russia.

Statement on Signing the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 *July 5, 1996*

Today I have signed into law S. 1579, the "Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996." This Act will help make Government work better by reducing the burden and cost of Federal audit requirements on State and local governments and nonprofit organizations.

The Single Audit Act of 1984 replaced multiple grant-by-grant audits with a single annual or biennial audit process for State and local governments that receive Federal assistance. S. 1579 builds on and improves upon the 1984 Act in several ways.

First, it will help save millions of dollars by reducing the need for costly audits without reducing essential Federal oversight. The threshold that triggers an audit requirement will be raised from \$25,000 to \$300,000. This preserves audit coverage for 95 percent of Federal assistance.

Second, the bill will reduce the audit burden for well-managed entities. Nonprofits and State and local governments that have put into oper-

ation management controls that assure the proper use of Federal assistance will be subject to less burdensome audit requirements.

Third, S. 1579 will improve the oversight of Federal assistance programs, totaling over \$250 billion annually, by focusing on the programs presenting the greatest financial risks to Government. Placing greater emphasis on program risks will ensure that Federal assistance is being used properly, while also ensuring the most effective use of Federal audit resources.

My Administration was actively involved in the development of this legislation, and strongly supported its passage. I am pleased to sign this important legislation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 5, 1996.

NOTE: S. 1579, approved July 5, was assigned Public Law No. 104-156.

The President's Radio Address *July 6, 1996*

Good morning. This holiday weekend we celebrate America's birthday and the values that hold us together as a community and a country. It's a time for family and fun, for games and fireworks and backyard barbecues. Tonight smoke will curl over homes on nearly every block as millions of families gather around the grill for the most American of meals, hamburgers and hotdogs and barbecued chicken.

Today I want to talk to you about the steps we're taking to make sure the food we cook in backyard barbecues is safe and wholesome.

Our families have every right to expect the food they serve their children is safe. They have every right to expect the world's most bountiful food supply will also be the world's safest. And in fact, our food is very safe.

Nearly a century ago, after muckrakers exposed dirty conditions in meat-packing plants, we made a national commitment to protect the public from unsafe food. It was one of the first ways we came together to meet the challenges of that new industrial age. Last year, we put in place new safety precautions for seafood. And

in recent years, we've learned that we all must continue to be vigilant on meat and poultry safety, and we learned it the hard way. For every year, scores of Americans still die and tens of thousands become sick from eating meat or poultry that is contaminated with harmful bacteria.

We all remember how in 1993 tragedy struck hundreds of families in the western United States. Undercooked hamburgers served in a fast food restaurant were contaminated with a deadly strain of *E. coli* bacteria. Five hundred people became ill, and four children died.

The parents of many of the *E. coli* victims turned their grief into a determination to help others. Some of them are here with me today. In the face of this unspeakable tragedy, they had one insistent question: How could this have happened? I asked that question too, and I asked my administration, what can we do to prevent it from happening again?

Now, sometimes food makes us sick because it's undercooked. But sometimes families have been exposed to illnesses because some meat and poultry shipped to our supermarket shelves contained invisible and deadly bacteria. The reason was shocking and simple: For all our technological advances, the way we inspect meat and poultry had not changed in 90 years. Even though we know that killers such as salmonella can only be seen with a microscope, inspectors were still checking on meat and poultry by look, touch, smell. We relied on an overworked cadre of Government inspectors, rather than working with the industry and challenging it to keep food safe.

Under the direction of Vice President Gore and Secretary Glickman, the United States Department of Agriculture has worked with industry, scientists, farmers, parents, and consumers to completely revamp our meat and poultry inspection system, to revolutionize the way our Nation protects food safety. This morning I want to announce the major changes that the U.S. Department of Agriculture will take to keep food safe and to protect our children from deadly bacteria.

First, we're challenging every meat-packing plant in America to do scientific tests or take other safety precautions at every step of production. Each company must design and put in place its own tough plan. We're not imposing

a detailed list of do's and don'ts. We're working with industry as partners, challenging them to find ways to make our meat the safest it can be. Each plant will be held accountable for meeting high standards at every step of the process.

Second, we're insisting that every slaughterhouse begin to conduct rigorous scientific tests to make sure the meat is not contaminated with deadly strains of *E. coli* and salmonella bacteria.

Third, companies will have to improve their sanitation procedures. All too often, food is contaminated because simple sanitary rules are not followed.

All these changes will be phased in over the coming months to make sure they are done right. These new meat and poultry contamination safeguards will be the strongest ever. They are flexible, and they do challenge the private sector to take responsibility. They also use the most up-to-date science to track down invisible threats. They protect the public without tangling business in redtape.

Parents should know that when they serve a chicken dinner they're not putting their children at risk. Parents should know that when a teenager borrows the car to get a fast food hamburger, the hamburger should be the least of their worries. Our new food safety initiative will give families the security to know that the food they eat is as safe as it can be.

To be sure, parents will also still have to take responsibility. There is no way to make food entirely free from risk; nature simply won't let us. So everyone should follow warning labels, be careful how you handle raw meat and poultry, and make sure it's well cooked before you serve it to your family.

These days families have enough to worry about. They shouldn't have to fear the food they eat is unsafe. With the tough steps we're taking today, America's parents should be able to breathe a little easier.

Have a safe and happy Fourth of July weekend.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.