

Statement on Signing Legislation To Extend Bankruptcy Relief for Family Farmers

March 30, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 808, which extends the provisions of chapter 12 of the Bankruptcy Code until October 1, 1999.

Chapter 12 of the Bankruptcy Code was enacted in 1986 to provide bankruptcy relief to our Nation's family farmers, who at the time were suffering through a severe agricultural crisis. The provisions of chapter 12 enabled family farmers to meet this financial crisis by allowing them to reorganize their debts and avoid the loss of their farms and way of life.

Despite the general widespread economic prosperity of recent years, many of our Nation's family farmers and ranchers are having difficulties and face losing their property and their livelihoods. Chapter 12 is an effective tool to mitigate the effects of the current agricultural crisis on family farmers and ranchers and on communities that depend upon them. By making it

easier for family farmers to work out their debts, chapter 12 also benefits creditors, who would be unlikely to obtain repayment if these farmers and ranchers went out of business.

Although I have signed this temporary extension, I urge the Congress to protect those family farmers and ranchers in financial distress by making the provisions of chapter 12 permanent. I also urge the Congress to expedite passage of my request for emergency funding of \$150 million to provide more than \$1 billion in loans for farmers and ranchers.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 30, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 808, approved March 30, was assigned Public Law No. 106-5.

Message on the Observance of Passover, 1999

March 30, 1999

Warm greetings to all those observing Passover.

This sacred holiday commemorates God's liberation of the Israelites from slavery and the beginning of the Jewish people's exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land. Their journey through the desert was long and difficult, but they were guided by the light of their faith and sustained by their dream of liberty. When at last they arrived in the Promised Land, they rejoiced in their freedom to worship God, to rebuild their communities, and to raise their children in the traditions and beliefs of the Jewish religion.

As a people who have always cherished the values of faith and freedom, all Americans can draw inspiration from the story of Passover. It

reminds us of our ongoing journey to build our own Promised Land, where all people are free to worship according to their conscience and where our children can grow up safe from the shadows of intolerance and oppression.

As families across the nation and around the world gather to remember the liberation of the Israelites and to teach a new generation the ancient tradition of the Passover Seder and the reading of the Haggadah, let us all give thanks for God's sustaining love and for the Jewish heritage that has so strengthened and enriched our national life.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes for a joyous Passover celebration.

BILL CLINTON