

**Statement on Signing Legislation
Providing Guaranteed Loans for
Farmers and Ranchers**

March 15, 1999

I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 882, a bill that will accelerate the availability of federally guaranteed loans to our Nation's farmers and ranchers to give them continued access to credit that is necessary to operate their farms and ranches.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that it will soon exhaust the funds available to guarantee loans for farm ownership and operations. This bill will make available more than \$450 million in guarantees to qualified farmers and ranchers. Normally, these funds are reserved for beginning farmers and ranchers until April 1, when they are made available to all qualified farmers and ranchers. This bill will not affect a separate reserve for minority farmers.

These additional amounts, however, will not fully address the unprecedented increase in demand for USDA financing caused by low commodity prices, which are expected to continue. For this reason, I recently submitted to the Congress an emergency supplemental request for an additional \$1.1 billion in USDA loan authority. I call on the Congress to work expeditiously to include these amounts in a supplemental bill I can sign that does not include unwise and unnecessary off-sets.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 15, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 882, approved March 15, was assigned Public Law No. 106-2.

**Statement on the Killing of
Rosemary Nelson in Northern
Ireland**

March 15, 1999

The killing today of Rosemary Nelson, a leading human rights lawyer in Northern Ireland, was a despicable and cowardly act by the enemies of peace. Our deepest sympathies go out to her family and friends. It

is long past time for the bloodshed to end once and for all. We urge all the proponents for peace to unite to condemn this act and reject the violence. We urge the parties to move forward with implementing the Good Friday accord.

**Statement on Senator John H.
Chafee's Decision Not To Seek
Reelection**

March 15, 1999

For more than a generation, Senator John Chafee has been a strong leader for his beloved Rhode Island and for America. He has been a tireless champion of our environment—helping to lead the fight against global warming, promoting wetlands conservation, and crafting legislation for clean air and safe drinking water. On behalf of all Americans, I thank him for his many contributions, including his leadership in expanding health care to more women and children and improving services for people with disabilities. It is truly a rich legacy for America. Hillary and I wish John and his family all the best in the years to come.

**Statement on the Cuban
Government's Sentencing
of Human Rights Activists**

March 15, 1999

I am deeply disappointed that the Cuban Government has sentenced four courageous human rights activists—Vladimiro Roca, Felix Bonne, Rene Gomez Manzano, and Marta Beatriz Roque—to prison terms. They did nothing more than assert their right to speak freely about their country's future, call on their Government to respect basic human rights, and seek a peaceful transition to democracy for the long-suffering Cuban people. They were tried without a fair process, behind closed doors. I call on the Cuban Government to release them immediately.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on the
National Emergency With Respect to
Iran**

March 15, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and section 505(c) of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, 22 U.S.C. 2349aa-9(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order 12957 of March 15, 1995.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 15, 1999.

**Remarks at the Sixth Millennium
Evening at the White House**

March 15, 1999

The President. Thank you. First of all, let me welcome all of you here tonight and thank our participants. I will be very brief, because the only thing that frustrates me about these Millennial Evenings is that you will be amazed—we will get literally thousands of questions that will start coming in on the Internet and lots of frustrated people out there. So I don't want to take a lot of time.

I would like to say again—I think I speak for all of us—when Hillary had the idea to do these evenings, I thought they sounded interesting or at least maybe most of them would be interesting. *[Laughter]* They have all turned out to be fascinating and, each in their own way, better than the ones before. And I think this is a great gift she has given our country for the millennium, and I thank her for it.

The remarks generated scores of questions in my mind and one fact I want to say. If you ever want an example of whether or not the gender gap exists, you are looking at it—*[laughter]*—because I would not be here if

it did not exist. Or if it did not exist in the right way, I would have had bigger margins, depending on how you look at it. *[Laughter]*

One of the things I wish that somebody would comment on before we get through—although, it's not my question—is, if women learn different ways of doing things through the century of struggle, how would this Congress be different if the party divisions were exactly the same, but 55 percent of the Members were women? That would be interesting. I don't know the answer to that, but feel free to comment if anyone wants to. *[Laughter]*

I want to ask Professor Kessler-Harris to answer a question that has concerned me quite a great deal, just from remembering the patterns of life with my working grandmother and my working mother. Now that we have opened more opportunities for women in the workplace, but they still are spending, I think, even in two-parent households, more than half of the time spent raising children, and we've even opened more opportunities for women in the political workplace, and more are being opened all the time, I would like to have you comment on what you think the potential is for voluntary citizens' groups of women to still produce both social movements and specific legislative changes. That is, will voluntary groups still have the same impact? And if so, how are we going to continue to encourage that?

Because I think that that's really the unique story of the whole 20th century, all those parades and everything we saw in the films. Will more women in the workplace, still having to raise the kids—and in the political workplace, which may make women think they're represented in more ordinary ways—lead to a reduction or an increase in these voluntary associations? And what are some specific examples where we might see voluntary movements produce social movements and legislative change?

[At this point, the discussion continued.]

The President. I just wanted to say one thing that I have learned from a lifetime of sort of listening to the way people talk and relate. And this goes to Deborah's—the previous question, too. I think if you will really