

So here is where we are. The good news is that we have, I think, an appropriate amount of money that has been set aside for education. The good news is yesterday we had our voucher debate, and the public school side won.

That's the good news. But we do not have anything like having—because at this moment we have this surplus and we're at a moment of prosperity, we were able to agree generally on what I think is an adequate increase in funding. But there is no commitment yet for more and better teachers, for smaller classes, for increased accountability, for higher standards, for giving the tools out there that we know that you know work.

So the good news is that the debate is not about dollars. But the more important news is it is very much about direction. It is very much about direction. And just as I fought to get a modest amount of Federal money to support your program, because I do believe that when you are certified and you go through this process, it is not only good for you and good for your students; it's good for everybody that you come in contact with in your school.

We were talking about, now you can see on the near horizon 25,000 of them. The reason that I said 100,000—that I want at least 100,000 board-certified teachers is, I do believe when you are dense enough, when there is one of you in every school building in America, there will be an exponential increase in your impact, that it will change the whole culture of virtually every school. And your skills and what you learn and how you will impart it to your colleagues will then be exploding, echoing across the country in a way that will embrace all the children in all our schools.

But if you believe in what you've done, then I ask you to also believe in this, and help us say, "Okay"—to the Congress—"thank you very much for not trying to cut out the money anymore. That's a big first step. But it does matter how you spend it."

And we're not trying to micromanage the schools. Dick Riley has gotten rid of two-thirds of the paperwork requirement on States and local school districts. We have scrapped more rules and regulations than all the previous administrations who railed

about the Federal Government put together. But what we have not done is to abandon our responsibility to take the research and the reports from the grassroots level and say, if we're going to spend this money, since it's limited, we have to spend it in ways that it will have the highest impact—more teachers, higher standards, the tools that you need to do what you're out there trying to do.

So I ask you to support it and help us, and I think we will prevail.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Yorktown Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency Washington. In his remarks, he referred to Carole D. Moyer, National Board Certified Teacher, Salem Elementary School, Columbus, OH; Barbara B. Kelley, chair, James A. Kelley, founding president, and Robert L. Wehling, vice chair, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; Betty Hastert, wife of House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert; and Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president for Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, and his wife, Sigrid; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Radio Remarks on Signing Agriculture Appropriations Legislation

October 22, 1999

Today I am signing into law the agriculture appropriations bill. This legislation provides critical funding for the Department of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration programs, including basic farm support programs, WIC, food safety efforts, and other measures to protect and support our rural communities.

It also provides emergency funds to assist our Nation's farmers and ranchers who are suffering the second year in a row of plummeting crop prices and, for many, record livestock losses from severe drought and flooding.

Let me say that I am disappointed that Congress didn't come through with more assistance for farmers and ranchers who suffered this year. This summer's drought and Hurricane Floyd and other natural disasters have inflicted literally billions of dollars in agricultural damage, and we need to do more

to help those farmers who have incurred these losses through no fault of their own.

Congress also has not responded effectively to the crisis facing many farms because of the sustained low prices of most commodities. This is the second year in a row that substantial Federal assistance has been needed above and beyond our regular farm programs.

Now, while these additional funds have been absolutely critical, the very fact that we've needed them points out the underlying flaws in the 1996 farm bill. For all its positive features, that bill simply did not do enough to help our farmers and ranchers cope in crisis. It doesn't give the USDA the tools it needs to help farmers and ranchers thrive in the short and long term. It doesn't direct payments to where they're most needed. And it's providing payments to those who aren't even farming anymore.

The bottom line is this: We need to revise, revamp, and improve the 1996 farm bill. It is not providing adequate support that our farmers need to prosper. So once again, I urge Congress to work to fix the farm bill permanently so American farmers can have an adequate safety net, just as the Vice President and I have worked hard to reinvent Government and give Government more impact and more effectiveness, even though we have the smallest Federal Government since 1962. We must take those kinds of steps, the necessary steps to rewrite this flawed farm legislation. The men and women who work every day to give us the world's most affordable and abundant food supply deserve nothing less.

So this is not a perfect piece of legislation, but I am signing it because our farmers are facing a true emergency and they can't wait. Their livelihoods—in some cases, their very survival—depend upon getting this bill signed and assistance delivered now.

Franklin Roosevelt once said that our farmers are the source from which the reservoirs of our Nation's strength are constantly renewed. We must strengthen and support our farms and farm families, just as they have sustained us throughout our history and will into the future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 11:30 a.m. on October 22 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the White House Conference on Philanthropy October 22, 1999

Thank you, and good afternoon. I am delighted to welcome all of you here. I thank all those who are here from our Government and all of you who have come from all over our country and all walks of life to this very, very important meeting.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to Hillary for yet another wonderful idea. This was a good idea to have this conference. And all of you who have helped on any of these millennium projects, I think it's done us a lot of good to take time out and think about the really big issues in our society and how we want them to play out in the years ahead. And particularly, I think this is an important issue at an important moment.

A long time ago, Alexis de Tocqueville said that charity in America was something more than simple compassion; it was a sign of good citizenship. He wrote, "Americans make great and real sacrifices to the public welfare. They hardly ever fail to lend faithful support to one another."

Today, this is a strong tradition, and the face of this tradition is changing. Philanthropy is, like our country, now more diverse as new groups seize and share opportunity in the new economy. It is more democratic, as Americans of all income levels, believe it or not, give at roughly equal levels. It is younger, as the high-tech economy creates a new generation of philanthropists.

I've got to take a little time out. Last night, I had dinner with a lot of these high-tech gurus who made allowances for the fact that I am obviously technologically challenged. [Laughter] And we were talking about how we were all going to relate to each other and maximize the potential of the information age. And I started talking about this conference today, and I said, "We've got to get