

Statement on Congressional Action on Farm Legislation

April 22, 2008

I am disappointed that Congress has failed to put forward a good farm bill, leaving farmers and ranchers in a state of continued uncertainty as to how they will be affected by Federal policies.

The farm bill proposal currently being discussed by conferees would fail several important tests that I have set forth. With record farm income, now is not the time for Congress to ask other sectors of the economy to pay higher taxes in order to increase the size of Government. The proposal would increase spending by at least \$16 billion, masked in part by budgetary gimmicks and funded in part by additional tax revenues. These tax revenue provisions are unacceptable, including tax compliance initiatives being considered by the House and Senate conference committee. As important, the proposal also lacks the important reforms I've repeatedly called for.

After last week's short-term extension of the farm bill, Congress now has only 4 days to provide certainty to America's farmers and ranchers. Despite the passage of more than a year since my administration unveiled a responsible and forward-looking farm bill proposal, there are no signs that the conference committee will reach agreement on an acceptable farm bill by Friday. I therefore call on Congress to provide our agricultural producers with the certainty to make sound business and planting decisions about this year's crop by extending current law for at least 1 year.

Statement on the No Child Left Behind Act

April 22, 2008

Today Education Secretary Margaret Spellings took an important step towards strengthening and improving the No Child Left Behind Act. In the 6 years since its enactment, this law has delivered real results for students across the country. Students are achieving record math and reading scores, and African American and Hispanic students

are making significant progress, posting all-time high scores in a number of categories.

No Child Left Behind was a bipartisan achievement. Unfortunately, at this time, Congress hasn't made noteworthy progress toward strengthening the law. In January, I indicated that the Secretary should move forward on reforms she can undertake administratively if Congress fails to act.

Secretary Spellings's announced package of regulations and pilot programs will address the dropout crisis in America, strengthen accountability, improve our lowest performing schools, and ensure that more students get access to high-quality tutoring. Her actions build on a series of administrative steps we've taken to provide additional flexibility to strengthen and improve the law to ensure continued progress toward the goal of every child reading and doing math at grade level by 2014.

Proclamation 8243—Older Americans Month, 2008

April 22, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During Older Americans Month, we recognize the many ways older citizens have enriched our Nation through their character, wisdom, and love.

Our country remains strong because of the foundation our elders have helped lay. This year's Older Americans Month theme, "Working Together for Strong, Healthy, and Supportive Communities," highlights the importance of building partnerships to ensure that older Americans are able to live with dignity and independence.

Every week thousands of older Americans give back to their communities by volunteering through groups like Senior Corps. From teaching young children how to read, to helping provide relief to those affected by natural disasters, seniors play an important and compassionate role in our Nation.

My Administration is dedicated to ensuring that our seniors are treated with the respect they have earned. They deserve to have