

subsidies that must be reduced under WTO rules.

If crop prices continue to fall, automatically increasing government payments to farmers, the US could run up against the Dollar 19.1bn per year that is the maximum allowed under these restrictions.

The administration and some critics in Congress have tried to fight back.

Ann Veneman, agriculture secretary, said earlier this month the new farm bill would “exacerbate overproduction and perpetuate low commodity prices”, and would compromise US efforts to open new markets abroad. Pat Roberts, the Kansas senator who was the chief author of the 1996 farm reform, was blunter.

He charged last week that the powerful farmers who will reap a windfall in new subsidies “view the farm bill as an ATM machine”, the American term for automatic cash dispensers. The administration and its outmanned supporters in Congress are hoping to delay final passage of the bill until next year when the government will produce new budget numbers. Those figures, which will show the federal surplus vanishing as a result of recession, tax cuts and the war on terror, could create pressure to curb farm spending.

The bloated farm bill legislation has indeed cast an embarrassing new light on rural America’s dependency on the federal government.

The Environmental Working Group, a non-profit organisation, last month posted on its website a comprehensive list of the subsidies received by more than 2.5m American farmers.

The data, obtained under US freedom of information laws, shows that a small number of large farmers gets the vast majority of federal payments. Just 1,290 farms have each received more than Dollars 1m in the past five years; Tyler Farms of Arkansas, which grows cotton, rice and soybeans, led the list at more than Dollars 23m.

In addition, 11 Fortune 500 companies, including Chevron and International Paper, also received farms subsidies. In contrast, the average farm in the bottom 80 per cent got just Dollars 5,830.

The new bill would only increase that trend by linking payments firmly to production, thereby rewarding the country’s largest farmers.

Other agricultural exporting countries like Australia and many Latin American nations are dismayed by the direction of US farm policy. Warren Truss, Australia’s agriculture minister, said during a visit to Washington last week that the new bill would “entrench a mentality of farm subsidies in the US.

“It is obvious that the US which once proudly boasted it had the most efficient farmers in the world, has now degenerated to a situation where US farmers are dependent upon the taxpayers for around half their income.”

The European Union, however, has been noticeably quiet on the farm bill debate. As the world’s largest provider of agricultural subsidies—at least for the moment—the EU has the most to gain from a bill that will do much to erase any US claims to free market virtue.

Said one EU agricultural official: “It has certainly taken the heat off us.”

day season is simply heartbreaking. But today too many charitable organizations are facing new funding constraints and cutting back on items like food vouchers. Many of us in Congress have been interested in looking for ways to resolve these problems and strengthen the partnership between charities and the Federal Government.

Senators LIEBERMAN and SANTORUM have been working throughout the year to develop just such a solution. Throughout their process they have consulted with my staff and the White House to ensure that the final product would be a consensus bill that would enjoy bipartisan support. I am pleased that the outlines to an agreement are now within reach. Had the Senate had more time, I would be very interested in seeing the package that has emerged introduced and debated by the full Senate.

The Lieberman-Santorum package is comprised of two limited components: one, a tax and technical assistance section; and two, a social services section that includes a title on equal treatment for non-governmental providers, authorization for a capital compassion fund, a program on mentoring for children of prisoners, and appropriations for funding Social Services Block Grants and Maternity Homes.

I am pleased that Senators LIEBERMAN and SANTORUM were able to resolve most of the problems that caused many to oppose H.R. 7. Their compromise package eliminated privatization and the voucherization of federal social service programs, as well as preemption of state and local civil rights laws. Their package also remained silent on Federal funding of pervasively sectarian organizations and expansion of the Title VII exemption.

I also support many of the tax and spending provisions that have been proposed. In particular, research shows that provisions like the IRA-rollovers and food and book donation provisions are effective in inducing new charitable giving. Additionally, increased funding for the Social Services Block Grant is an important provision to ensure that at long last we fulfill our commitment to providing adequate resources for community programs.

While much hard work has already been done on all sides to get a bill that can pass, some concerns remain with provisions of this package. Given the slowing economy and OMB Director Daniels’ statement that the budget will be in deficit this year and for several years to come, the Senate must be careful about any new tax and spending measures that are unpaid for.

Therefore, while I strongly support increasing funding to charities, the changing economic outlook demands that fiscal responsibility be adhered to when enacting new tax cuts. As we move into the fiscal year 2003 budget cycle, I look forward to working with Senators LIEBERMAN and SANTORUM, as well as the White House, to identify workable offsets.

It is my hope that the work that Senators LIEBERMAN and SANTORUM have done will not go to waste. I believe that next year we can build on the bipartisan process that Senators LIEBERMAN and SANTORUM have created to resolve these outstanding issues. Once we do that I am confident the Senate will be able to quickly move a consensus bill. Finally, let me applaud Senators LIEBERMAN and SANTORUM for their work and dedication to this important issue.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, as a former Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I would like to shed a bit of the light of history on the Committee’s record this year with regard to judicial nominations. The first year of an Administration is always difficult, with a new Administration settling in and the need in the Senate to confirm a host of non-judicial officials to serve in that new Administration. As a result, the Senate’s duty to “advise and consent” in judicial nominations is all the more difficult to fulfill. I was privileged to serve as Chairman of the Judiciary Committee the last two times a new Administration came into the White House. In 1993, when President Clinton arrived, we worked hard and confirmed 28 judges that first year, with the White House and the Senate controlled by the same party. In 1989, when the first President Bush took office, with an opposing Senate, we managed only 15 judicial confirmations in the first year.

This year, the White House got a late start on its executive branch nominees, due to the election battle. For this and other reasons, no judges were confirmed while the Republicans held the Senate this year. Since June, when the Democrats took control of the Senate, the White House and the Senate have been controlled by different parties, normally a recipe for stagnation on judicial confirmations. Still, by the end of this year, if all goes as expected, we will have confirmed more judges—more than twice the number confirmed in 1989, and even more than we accomplished in 1993, when the White House and the Senate were held by the same party. And as the guy who was running the Judiciary Committee in 1989 and 1993, I can tell you that we were not sitting on our hands back then. And clearly the Committee has not been dawdling this year.

Now, some people would come back and say “well, what about appeals courts? Appellate judges are far more important than district court judges.” As a matter of fact, we have confirmed more nominees to the appeals courts since June than were confirmed in all of 1993 or 1989.

Some people will come back and say “but Joe, you know what really matters is whether the number of vacancies is growing or shrinking. Are we filling the slots?” That’s true—what

FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, unfortunately, during this holiday season there has been a decline in charitable donations. In the land of plenty, having children going hungry during the holi-

really matters is not the whole number of judges confirmed, but whether we are making progress on filling the vacancies that have opened up on the federal bench. Again, let's look at the numbers. In 1993, with the White House and Senate in the same hands, we barely managed to reduce the number of vacancies, by 3 slots. In 1989, with the White House and the Senate split between the Republicans and the Democrats, the number of vacancies grew over the course of the year by 14 slots—the Senate could not keep pace with the retirements and resignations of federal judges. (It's worth noting as well that, during the entire recent period when the Committee was chaired by the Republicans, judicial vacancies grew by 65 percent). By contrast, this year, we will have reduced the number of vacancies by 20, or 18 percent. And that's only since June. With the White House and the Senate controlled by different parties. And with the September 11 attacks happening right smack in the middle of that period!

I should point out that another hurdle was thrown into the Senate confirmation process this year, which was not there in previous years. The White House announced that it would no longer vet potential nominees with the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Judiciary. As a result, now the ABA's evaluation of nominees must happen as part of the Senate confirmation process, after the candidate has been nominated by the White House. This step adds weeks to any confirmation.

I should also point out that, not only did September 11 disrupt just about everything that was happening in this country, but it particularly affected the Senate; we had to turn immediately to legislation necessary to authorize the war on terrorism. Moreover, the arrival of anthrax on Capitol Hill displaced many Senators and staff, including Judiciary Committee staff. My own Judiciary Committee staff has not had access to their judicial nominations files—not to mention their office—for the past two months.

Despite all of these disruptions and delays, which I did not face when I chaired the Committee, and which the Republicans did not face during the past 6 years when they controlled the Committee, we will have confirmed more judges by the end of this year than in the first year of the Clinton Administration, and more than twice as many as in the first year of the first Bush Administration. And we will have significantly reduced the number of judicial vacancies from in just 6 months. So, let my friends on the other side of the aisle tone down their rhetoric, and consult their history books.

TECHNOLOGY AND TERRORISM

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, it is becoming increasingly clear that American technological supremacy will be an invaluable asset in our efforts to

combat international terrorism and protect our citizens from further attack. The technological advantages we now enjoy—in weapons, in communications infrastructure, and in detection systems—must be both aggressively pursued and zealously guarded.

For example, the recent anthrax attacks in this country highlight the need for the prompt deployment of effective technology to track the origins of the dangerous biochemical substances that threaten our security. This lack of important information hampers our ability to track down, capture, and punish terrorists and their supporters. The technology to accomplish this goal exists, and can be quickly and inexpensively modified to law enforcement and public safety requirements. However, the government needs to make this a priority.

Although we have long held concern for the impact of hazardous materials on the public, the terrorist attack of September 11 and subsequent attacks require a heightened response. The weaponization of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (“CBRN”) materials demands an accounting of these high-risk materials, particularly as they accumulate at seemingly innocent locations. Tracking CBRN materials is an important step in anticipating and preventing their misuse and thereby thwarting terrorist activity.

We currently have the capability for sophisticated materials management that connects people, places, processes, and products in a manner critical to security. The federal and local governments should work to put in service high-risk material tracking systems that provide the basis for powerful, instantaneous decision making. The government control centers can observe the global position of hazardous materials provided by producers and users in all our allied nations. In less accessible locations, the information could be collected through satellite technology.

Such a hazardous materials management system should: provide for data collection and for authorization at customs operations and border controls; use sophisticated bar code and embedded chip data transmitting devices; employ handheld capabilities to manage field operations and material logistics; have multi-language capability and global reach; integrate with e-solutions and Defense Department Enterprise Resource Planning systems; and make use of data mining and knowledge management principles.

Our Nation should immediately move to identify and track the movement or accumulation of CBRN materials. We must monitor CBRN materials at all global locations, including where they are produced, transported, used, staged and/or stored. And we must track, consolidate and analyze the CBRN material movements as the basis for a legitimate solution to the threats posed to Americans and our citizens abroad.

At the same time that we use technology to better protect Americans, we

must make certain that our technological infrastructure is protected from attack. To that end, critical infrastructure should undergo automated electronic testing of their internal and external network assets on a frequent and recurring basis. This testing should include written or electronic reports detailing the methods of testing used and the results of all tests performed, so that trend-line analysis of network security posture can be conducted.

The Policy on Critical Infrastructure Protection: Presidential Decision Directive 63 (“PDD-63”) provided a starting point for addressing cyber risks against our Nation. This directive identified the critical sectors of our economy and assigned lead agencies to coordinate sector cyber security efforts. This directive presents the vision that “the United States will take all necessary measures to eliminate swiftly any significant vulnerability to both physical and cyber attacks on our critical infrastructures, including especially our cyber systems.”

I believe that we can prepare a defense for our critical infrastructure much like we prepared for problems associated with the year 2000 computer bug. First, we need, as the President recently appointed, an executive agent for cyberspace security, who has the power necessary to cause mandatory private and public interaction and coordination. Second, we must consider empowering and funding each PDD-63 lead agency to establish quantitative baselines of the external and internal network security posture of their portion of critical industries. This can be done through automated electronic testing. Third, we must identify vulnerable critical systems within the critical infrastructures and secure them to the extent possible through software updates, patches, and other correcting configuration issues. Fourth, we should mandate continued automated electronic reassessment of systems, especially after upgrades or patches are applied. This will provide quantitative views of security over time. We must also enforce electronic documentation of reassessments and hold businesses and vendors accountable for failure to adhere to security mandates. Finally, we must expand our domestic partnerships to global public/private partnerships, including both coalition governments and multinational corporations. I would also think that the broadening of mandates in these partnerships should consider standards for layered security, penetration testing, and demonstrate a commitment to the development and installation of wireless equivalency protocols.

We must make use of every tool at our disposal in our fight against terrorism. We must take advantage of American ingenuity and our technological supremacy as we work to rid the world of terrorism. In addition, it is critical that we protect our critical