

\$21.6 billion—another record. It is also understood that when we return from the Memorial Day recess, the FY 2001 Agriculture Appropriations bill may be before the Senate, and it may contain additional emergency spending for the current fiscal year.

At a time when the U.S. Congress and the European Parliament are focused on agriculture trade issues, and the level of subsidies being provided on both sides of the Atlantic, I think it is important to take a step back and make sure we all understand what assistance is being provided in this bill to agriculture.

I will support this conference agreement today. But I hope that another bill the Senate may consider after the recess—the PNTR China bill—will provide expanded markets for our agriculture sector and thereby lessen the need for future agriculture subsidies. Most farmers and ranchers I know want to and will produce for the market given a chance. They do not want and should not want to “farm” government subsidies.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank the Chair. Mr. President, I thank Senator LUGAR, Senator HARKIN, and all the conferees for their hard work in producing a fair final crop insurance package that will provide \$100 million in targeted programs for Northeastern farmers who have struggled in recent years, facing low prices and severe damage by drought, flooding, and freezing.

Speaking on behalf of the farmers of New York State, I especially thank my esteemed colleague, Senator PAT LEAHY, and his hardworking staff—Ed Barron, J.P. Dowd, and Melody Burkins—for their creativity and persistence in defending the interests of our region which have all too often been neglected in agricultural debates.

Back in March, I joined Senators PAT LEAHY, BOB TORRICELLI, and JACK REED in a spirited and successful effort to amend this bill to include, for the first time in the history of crop insurance, funds targeted specifically to help our region.

Northeastern farmers have historically low participation in crop insurance for several reasons. Many grow speciality crops that are not eligible for Federal crop insurance, or find that, while they are eligible, the Federal crop insurance programs do not fit their needs. Many are simply not aware of available crop insurance options or have no agents located nearby to sell them policies.

The results have often been catastrophic. When a disaster such as last summer's drought strikes, our farmers have no safety net to fall back on, unlike so many of their Midwestern and Southern counterparts.

As such, these provisions—a \$50 million program to promote risk manage-

ment practices tailored to Northeastern farmers, \$25 million for crop insurance education and recruitment targeted at areas traditionally underserved by crop insurance, and \$25 million for research into better crop insurance programs for the Northeast—will go a long way to helping the farmers of New England and the Mid-Atlantic region.

Our farmers will especially benefit from the removal of the area trigger for crop insurance policies. This will benefit farmers located in areas isolated by valleys or mountains by allowing them to collect crop insurance for their localized disasters.

Further, specialty crop farmers, as so many of the fruit and vegetables growers in New York State, will benefit from the \$200 million USDA purchase of speciality crops as directed in the emergency agriculture package attached to this bill.

I also echo Senator LEAHY's remarks on our understanding of the Agriculture appropriations bill, which we have been assured will contain several additional critical provisions, particularly the assistance for our Nation's dairy farmers who have suffered terribly from low prices, and for apple farmers who have been hard hit by low yields and low quality after 2 years of unavoidable weather extremes, from hurricanes to drought.

I have visited regularly with dairy and apple farmers in my own State and can say they desperately need our help.

I thank, once again, the conferees for crafting a bill that for the first time truly takes into account the unique needs of Northeastern farmers. I voted for the package, and I am glad so many of my fellow Senators voted for it as well.

TRIBUTE TO PAT ROONEY

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, today, I rise to pay tribute to a businessman who has witnessed the transformation of a company from a single plant operation into a multinational corporation. The businessman I am referring to is Pat Rooney, who is retiring on June 3rd after almost 45 years of service to Cooper Tire and Rubber Company. Mr. Rooney began his career with Cooper Tire in 1956 as a sales trainee. In 1994, Pat Rooney was elected CEO and Chairman of the Board of Cooper Tire. That hierarchical progression is astounding. In this day and time with the ever changing economy, it is almost hard to fathom someone working for one employer for four and a half decades. Pat Rooney saw Cooper Tire and Rubber grow from 1,000 total employees to now 25,000 worldwide. During his tenure at Cooper Tire, Mr. Rooney spent time working in Clarksdale, Mississippi at the rubber products operation in the Mississippi Delta. Cooper has built a significant presence in my

state, employing numerous Mississippians at locations in Clarksdale and Tupelo. Pat Rooney lives in Findlay, Ohio and has been very active in the community. He is a Rotarian, active in the Findlay/Hancock County Chamber of Commerce, and the County Community Development Foundation and served on the advisory council of the Arts Partnership of Hancock County. Again, I want to commend Pat Rooney today for his service to his company and his community. Cooper Tire has been fortunate to have such a dedicated employee, leader, and visionary. Mr. Rooney I hope you will enjoy your well deserved retirement.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, earlier this month, the Senate began consideration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a reauthorization bill that would determine our national education policy. We spent a few days on that bill, offering and debating amendments, to reduce class size and reward teachers who improve student achievement, among other things.

On May 9, 2000, the Majority Leader withdrew the education bill from consideration, and the Senate moved on to other business. At the time, the Majority Leader indicated his intent to come back to the education bill, either later in that same week, or the week after.

It is now more than three weeks later and Congress is preparing to adjourn for the Memorial Day recess without addressing a critical component of our national education policy: school safety.

The education bill was likely withdrawn from the Senate because of the possibility of a school safety amendment aimed at curbing gun violence. Unfortunately, education and gun violence are now inseparable issues. The wave of school shootings—in Jonesboro, Arkansas, Littleton, Colorado, and recently, in Mt. Morris Township, Michigan—has changed America's perception of safety in school.

Over the last few years, we have made some gains. Over the four year period, from 1993 to 1997, the percentage of high school students who carried a weapon to school declined from 12% to 9%; the rate of crime against students ages 12 to 18 fell one-third; and 90 percent of schools reported no incidents of serious violent crime in 1996–1997.

Despite these gains, students feel less safe at school, and access to guns is a primary reason why. School violence, or even the threat of school violence, instills fear in our students, and limits their ability to learn. School violence also threatens and intimidates teachers—making instruction more difficult.

The learning environment is in jeopardy, and unless we address the