

situation. I salute the Congress for enacting this proposal, as well as providing \$300 million in additional resources for rural development and agricultural research through the "Fund for Rural America."

I also wholeheartedly endorse the bill's conservation provisions. The bill will enhance contributions to environmental quality and farm income from the Conservation Reserve Program, a program whose importance I have repeatedly stressed. This bill provides more than \$1 billion over 7 years for on-farm conservation measures, including assistance for livestock producers, which will help prevent soil erosion and clear our streams and air. I am also glad to see that farmers will still have the choice to enroll permanent easements in the Wetlands Reserve Program.

In addition, the bill would provide \$200 million, with the possibility of an additional \$150 million, for restoration of the Everglades. This project is one of the Administration's top environmental priorities, and the funds in this bill are a good downpayment toward our goal. Moreover, I call on the Congress to enact the Administration's comprehensive Everglades restoration plan, including the one-cent per pound marketing assessment on Florida sugar. This assessment would ensure that the benefitting industry pays its fair share.

I am also generally pleased with the trade title, which includes almost all of the Administration's proposed export program enhancements. While the Administration opposed the reduced funding for certain export programs in the bill, it will use these, and newly authorized tools, to expand upon the record levels of agricultural exports we have achieved. This will ensure that America's farmers continue to take

advantage of the growing opportunities in the world market.

I am disappointed that the Congress has rolled back an important reform of the crop insurance program, which was enacted just 18 months ago, to ensure that every farmer has crop insurance where it is available. Still, the farm bill embodies a clear commitment to maintain crop insurance as an alternative to costly and unreliable ad hoc crop disaster programs of the past. In this respect, the Administration strongly supports the development of new "revenue insurance" approaches over the coming years so that the crop insurance safety net can play an increasingly large role in the farm economy. This is a key component of our strategy to continue to help farmers manage the risks they face.

While commodity and conservation programs remain the core of any farm bill, much of the future of agriculture and rural America will be determined by many other factors outside the traditional scope of those programs. This bill recognizes the growing importance of those forces and incorporates many of the reforms the Administration sought. While seeking improvements in the farm safety net, I will also charge my Administration with using the bill's new tools to ensure that agriculture sustains the growth it has achieved, that the pace of environmental improvements is accelerated, and that we create new economic opportunities for farmers and rural citizens.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
April 4, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 2854, approved April 4, was assigned Public Law No. 104-127.

Remarks at a Tree Planting Ceremony Honoring Those Who Died in the Aircraft Tragedy in Croatia

April 5, 1996

Last year, as we prepared to go to Oklahoma City, Hillary and I planted a dogwood tree here in honor of the public servants who lost their lives there. And this year as we prepare to go back, almost a year later, we are planting, sadly,

another tree in honor of Secretary Brown and all the public servants of the United States and the citizens who lost their lives in the plane crash. We hope the prayers of the American people will be with them and their families at

this difficult time. We hope everyone will honor the contributions they made to the United States and the welfare of our people.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks at the Plaque Dedication Ceremony for the New YMCA Day Care Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma April 5, 1996

Thank you very much. Governor Keating, Senator Nickles, Mr. Mayor, Lieutenant Governor Fallin, Congressman Brewster, Congressman Istook, to the families that are behind me and the children that just made the walk with us and their parents, I thank them.

I was especially glad to see Brandon and Rebecca Denny, because they came to see Hillary and me in the White House and I thought they would be glad to see us again. But I asked them if they remembered meeting me; they said, "Yes. How's Socks?" [Laughter] So I thought to myself, things are maybe beginning to get back to normal in Oklahoma City; at least the children have their priorities in order.

Hillary and I thought a lot about where we were last year when we came down here to be with you and with our friend James Lee Witt, the FEMA Director, who is also here today. And I wondered what I ought to say. Let me begin by noting that this is, after all, Good Friday. It is a day for those of us who are Christians that marks the passage from loss and despair to hope and redemption. And in a way that is the lesson of this little walk we just took with these children and their parents, from a place where we mourn lives cut so brutally short to this place where, thanks to you and all of those who the Lieutenant Governor mentioned, we can truly celebrate new beginnings.

I hope the lesson of the walk and this effort will comfort and inspire all of those here in Oklahoma City and especially those who are, as the Governor said, still hurting, still searching, still working to put their lives back together. I know there's nothing that anyone can do to bring back the children whose lives were taken from us, nothing we can do to sweep away the frightening memories that still linger in the children who survived, except to continue to work until they finally go away.

But what you have done is to show our children that in the wake of evil, goodness can surround them and lift them up. You have done a lot here already to prove that their lives are strong and powerful, like the tree behind me, which has now become famous around the country. Everybody wants to know why this tree stood up when the bomb went off. It lost its leaves and its bark, and it's still kind of ugly—[laughter]—but it survived, and it's going to bloom again. Why is it going to bloom again? Because its roots kept it strong and standing.

The survivors and the spirit of this community are blooming again because your roots kept you strong and standing. Now we see it in this child care center that we are here to dedicate today. It's a testament, really, to the resilience of the human spirit and the fierce devotion of the parents of this community and the larger community, what Hillary likes to call "the village of citizens," who are determined to support your children and their future. When something really terrible happens, it's easy to forget how important basic things are. It's pretty important for children to have a safe place to fingerpaint or plead with the teacher to read a book for the fifth time or just play in a secure and safe environment.

These places, like the one you are preparing here for your children, are places where our kids begin to learn how to relate to other children. And they have to learn to live out the essential values that have stood our American family so well for so long. They really have to learn how to build instead of tear down, to work together instead of run away, how to treat other people who are just like them with respect and fairness. By rebuilding a place for children to learn these lessons and to play and to laugh again, all of you, as citizens, have done the most honorable thing a nation could ask for, and I want to thank you for that.