

I'm here with the Governor—the great Governor of Louisiana to lend my support to John Kennedy for the United States Senate. I thank Becky and Preston for joining us as well. John Kennedy will make a fine Senator for the people of Louisiana. He's a fiscal watchdog. He cares about the taxpayers' money. He's made a career out of making sure that whenever government spends money, it's spent wisely, and that's the kind of Senator Louisiana needs.

He'll support the troops. He'll support those who wear our Nation's uniform. And he'll see our troops are funded without the United States Senate telling our military how to conduct the war. So I appreciate your strong support for our military, John.

You know, one of the issues that the Senate will be faced [with]^{*} is whether or not to raise people's taxes. John Kennedy has pledged to keep taxes low. We want the people here in Louisiana to have more of their own money to spend. And we can meet our priorities at the Federal Government without getting into the pockets of the people of Louisiana.

And finally, John Kennedy understands that our most important task is to protect the American people from harm. And if Al Qaida is making a phone call into the

United States, he understands we need to know who they're talking to and why they're making the call.

So I look forward to having a man in the Senate who understands the priorities have got to be to protect the American people and understands that the same civil liberties given to our people shouldn't be extended to terrorists who want to do us harm.

So I wish you all the best, Senator-to-be. We got a good fundraiser for you. I'm honored that you would invite me here. And I look—ask the people of Louisiana to give this good man a fair hearing—more importantly, give him their vote, because he'll do a fine job as the United States Senator.

Thank you and congratulations.

John N. Kennedy. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you so much.

The President. Good to see you. Let's load up and get going.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:19 p.m. at Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Piyush "Bobby" Jindal of Louisiana; and Becky, wife, and Preston, son, of senatorial candidate John N. Kennedy.

Statement 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

^{*} White House correction.

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 alltime 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.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Gold Medal to Michael E.

DeBakey

April 23, 2008

Madam Speaker, Mr. Leader, Members of Congress, fellow Texans, distinguished guests, Dr. and Mrs. DeBakey: I'm honored to join you on this day of celebration. Throughout our Nation's history, the Congressional Gold Medal has been awarded sparingly, in recognition of the tremendous accomplishments that it takes to earn this high honor. The recipients of this medal who have come from the world of science

are few, but they are iconic. They include Thomas Edison, Walter Reed, and Jonas Salk. Today we gather to recognize that Michael DeBakey's name belongs among them.

I appreciate the members of the Texas delegation, Senator Hutchison, Representative Green, and others, who sponsored this legislation.