

Week Ending Friday, May 29, 1998

**Statement on House of
Representatives Action on
Agriculture Legislation**

May 22, 1998

I am deeply disappointed that today the House did not approve the conference report on the agricultural research bill. This carefully crafted legislation balances a broad range of agricultural and nutrition concerns including: crop insurance, agriculture research, rural development, and food stamps for legal immigrants in need. It provides critical funding to ensure the viability of the crop insurance program as the basis of the farm income safety net; to improve food safety and the competitiveness of our farmers through better research; to restore needed food stamps to children, the elderly, and disabled, and refugees among our legal immigrants; and to improve the quality of life in rural areas.

I am grateful that the House today overwhelmingly defeated a rule that would have stripped the food stamp immigrant provisions from the bill and destroyed the delicate compromise in the conference report. Support across the country for these programs and this bill is wide and deep. Today's vote in the House and the Senate's overwhelming vote of 92-8 in passing the conference report is a reflection of the strong backing by farm groups, universities, church organizations, and advocates for the poor.

The House leadership today let down farmers, let down consumers, and let down the children, elderly, and disabled who need the food assistance contained in this bill. I urge the House of Representatives to complete its work and move expeditiously to pass the conference report without change, upon return from the Memorial Day recess.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

May 23, 1998

Good morning. This weekend marks the time when we honor the brave men and women who gave their lives to serve our country, and we thank the hundreds of thousands of Americans in uniform who protect and defend us every day all around the world. But this Memorial Day weekend, Americans are also praying for the people who lost their lives and for those who were wounded when a 15-year-old boy with semiautomatic weapons opened fire in Springfield, Oregon, this Thursday.

Like all Americans, I am deeply shocked and saddened by this tragedy, and my thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families. Like all Americans, I am struggling to make sense of the senseless and to understand what could drive a teenager to commit such a terrible act. And like all Americans, I am profoundly troubled by the startling similarity of this crime to the other tragic incidents that have stunned America in less than a year's time: in Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Pearl, Mississippi; and Edinboro, Pennsylvania.

We must face up to the fact that these are more than isolated incidents. They are symptoms of a changing culture that desensitizes our children to violence; where most teenagers have seen hundreds or even thousands of murders on television, in movies, and in video games before they graduate from high school; where too many young people seem unable or unwilling to take responsibility for their actions; and where all too often, everyday conflicts are resolved not with words but with weapons, which, even when illegal to possess by children, are all too easy to get.

We cannot afford to ignore these conditions. Whether it's gang members taking their deadly quarrels into our schools, or inexplicable eruptions of violence in otherwise