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Utah is the largest such land exchange in the history of the lower 48 States. The exchange will help capitalize a long-neglected State school trust by putting it on solid footing and allowing it to pay rewards to the children of Utah for generations to come. The United States will obtain valuable land, thus allowing it to consolidate resources within the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, the Goshute and Navajo Indian Reservations, and national parks and forests in Utah.

This Act brings to an end 6 decades of controversy surrounding State lands within Utah's national parks, forests, monuments, and reservations, and ushers in a new era of cooperation and progressive land management. We have shown that good faith, hard work, bipartisanship, and a commitment to protect both the environment and the taxpayer can result in a tremendous victory for all. I especially wish to thank Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and Kathleen McGinty, outgoing Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, for their contribution to this major achievement.

The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, a magnificent natural wonder and scientific treasure trove, was born 2 years ago. On that day, I made a promise to work to ensure that Utah's schoolchildren, the beneficiaries of the State trust holdings within the Monument, would in fact benefit from, and not be harmed by, the establishment of this national showcase.

I am proud to say we have kept our promise. We have delivered more, and in a shorter time, than perhaps anyone believed possible. In these 2 years, we have worked closely with citizens and elected officials alike to make America's newest National Monument a success of which we all can be proud.

This bipartisan legislation shows that we can work together for the common good, for our environment, for education, and for our shared legacy as stewards of the Nation's natural public land treasures.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 31, 1998.

NOTE: H.R. 3830, approved October 31, was assigned Public Law No. 105–335.

Statement on Signing the William F. Goodling Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 1998

October 31, 1998

Today I am signing into law H.R. 3874, the ''William F. Goodling Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 1998.'' This legislation extends the authorization of appropriations for a number of child nutrition programs, including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children—more commonly known as WIC—and the Summer Food Service and Farmers Market Nutrition Programs. In addition, it makes various amendments to these programs to expand children's access to food assistance and improve the programs' operation, management, integrity, and safety. I am pleased that this Act includes many provisions that my Administration proposed.

The Act will help to improve the nutritional and health status of America's most needy children. In particular, H.R. 3874 permits schools and other nonprofit institutions providing after-school care to older, ''at-risk'' youth to receive meal supplements at no charge. In addition, it continues to allow children in the Even Start Family Literacy Program to be eligible for free school meals.

The Act makes a number of changes to improve the administration, efficiency, and integrity of the child nutrition programs while protecting health and safety standards. It removes barriers to the participation of private, nonprofit organizations in the Summer Food Service Program, especially in rural areas, and streamlines many National School Lunch Program procedures. In addition, it revises program licensing requirements to allow more child care providers to provide Federally funded snacks to needy children. Furthermore, it ensures health and safety inspections of school food service operations where they are currently not required.

The Act is tough on fraud and abuse. It allows the Department of Agriculture to permanently disqualify from the WIC program vendors convicted of trafficking food instruments—such as WIC vouchers or electronic benefit transfer cards—or selling firearms, ammunition, explosives, or controlled substances in exchange for them. In addition,

it requires WIC applicants to appear in person to apply for benefits and document their income as a condition of receiving benefits.

It is well known that a strong relationship exists between children's nutritional status and their ability to learn, and I remain vitally concerned that all school children have what they need to succeed in school. In joining together to support H.R. 3874, my Administration and the Congress have forged a bipartisan opportunity to improve the nutrition, health, and well-being of our Nation's children. I am pleased to sign this legislation into law.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 31, 1998.

NOTE: H.R. 3874, approved October 31, was assigned Public Law No. 105–336.

Statement on Signing the Haskell Indian Nations University and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute Administrative Systems Act of 1998

October 31, 1998

Today I am signing into law H.R. 4259, the ''Haskell Indian Nations University and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute Administrative Systems Act of 1998.'' Haskell Indian Nations University (Haskell) and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) are the only Federally owned and operated schools in the United States dedicated to higher education for American Indians. Together they have provided thousands of American Indians valuable educational opportunities. This Act will broaden and increase those opportunities by assisting both institutions in their ongoing efforts to attract and retain highly qualified administrators, faculty, and staff.

The Act authorizes Haskell and SIPI each to conduct a 5-year demonstration project to test the feasibility and desirability of alternative personnel management systems designed to meet the special staffing circumstances in a college and university setting. Currently, Haskell and SIPI operate under the same civil service personnel system as most other Federal agencies. The demonstration projects authorized by H.R. 4259 will provide these schools flexibility to test personnel reforms in areas such as recruitment, hiring, compensation, training, discipline, promotion, and benefits. At the same time, the Act maintains continued adherence to applicable laws and regulations on matters such as equal employment opportunity, Indian preference, and veterans' preference. My expectation is that, at the conclusion of these demonstration projects, these schools will have tested alternative personnel systems that maintain important employee benefits and protections while promoting the flexibility necessary in a college and university setting.

In signing H.R. 4259, I recognize that the legislation raises several concerns. It allows Haskell and SIPI to conduct demonstration projects involving leave and other employee benefits, such as retirement, health benefits, and life insurance—something no other Federal agency has been permitted to do. We must be mindful that altering employees' benefits for even a brief portion of their careers can have a serious long-term effect. Should such modifications be applied to a large number of Federal employees through other demonstration projects they could have a damaging effect on the Federal retirement and insurance trust funds, which depend on spreading risk of loss over the largest possible group of individuals. These concerns are compounded by the fact that H.R. 4259 does not provide for the level of oversight by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) that is typically required for personnel-related demonstration projects.

Because of these concerns, I am directing the Secretary of the Interior and the presidents of Haskell and SIPI to involve the OPM fully in the development and evaluation of the schools' demonstration projects. This involvement is only appropriate given the OPM's important role in managing and safeguarding Federal employee benefits programs and overseeing demonstration