

persons who receive payments under this Act, to the extent of the payments. The Congress reaffirms my authority to pursue these subrogated rights as claims or offsets against Iran in appropriate ways, including negotiations leading to any normalization process. In addition, no funds are permitted to be paid to Iran, or released to Iran, from property blocked under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act or the Foreign Military Sales Fund, until such claims have been dealt with to the satisfaction of the United States. The determination that the claims have been dealt with to the satisfaction of the United States will be subject to Presidential discretion.

This legislation is a measure of the United States Government's commitment to the victims of terrorism, to deter future acts of terrorism, and to defend the United States from its evils. It is not designed to preclude any other means to this end. The United States will continue to pursue an aggressive, comprehensive policy incorporating diplomacy, law enforcement, intelligence, and other means to protect its citizens.

In conclusion, I would like to recognize and congratulate the bipartisan sponsorship of, and support for, the "Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act of 2000." Its enactment is an achievement of which all involved may be justly proud. It will serve us well in the years ahead as we continue to do what is needed to detect and eradicate trafficking in persons, violence against women, and other reprehensible forms of criminal conduct.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 28, 2000.

NOTE: H.R. 3244, the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, approved October 28, was assigned Public Law No. 106-386.

Remarks on the Budget and Legislative Agenda and an Exchange With Reporters

October 28, 2000

The President. Good afternoon.

Q. Got it right.

The President. I got it right. I'm making progress. *[Laughter]*

As I said yesterday, when this Congress has acted in a spirit of genuine bipartisanship, we have made profound progress. Yesterday I signed the VA/HUD bill that invests in the health of veterans, advances welfare reform with 75,000 housing vouchers, strengthens AmeriCorps, and invests in cutting-edge scientific research with the largest increase ever in the National Science Foundation.

Earlier this month I signed an Interior bill that creates the largest appropriation for lands preservation in our Nation's history. I also look forward to signing the bipartisan foreign operations bill, which will fund our debt relief initiative for the poorest countries in the world.

And just a few moments ago, I signed a vitally important and bipartisan Agriculture appropriations bill. This legislation will fund our Nation's agriculture programs for the coming year and provided much need help to our farmers, our ranchers, our rural communities, who have suffered everything from devastating droughts to low commodity prices.

It also contains the largest increase ever in development funding for rural and Native American communities that have not shared in our Nation's prosperity. It will help to create new businesses and expand current ones in small towns and rural areas. It will help rural communities attract new residents, and with funding for new health clinics and improved water systems, it will improve the quality of life all across rural America.

The bill also will help us provide humanitarian relief and development loans to countries that need help, and promote the sale of United States goods abroad. The bill modernizes our food inspection system with increased surveillance and more food inspectors.

Finally, this bill includes commonsense reforms that will let food stamp recipients own a dependable car and have decent housing. If we want people to go to work, they have to be able to get to work. They shouldn't have to choose between a car they need to get to their jobs and the nutrition and shelter they need for their children.

This is a good bill for America. It helps hard-hit farmers, ranchers, and rural communities; improves the safety of our food; and takes the next steps in welfare reform. Of course, there are also things in the bill I don't like. It says it allows the importation of lower cost prescription drugs from other countries but leaves the power of deciding whether or not to import these drugs to the drug companies, meaning it will do nothing for seniors and others struggling to pay high prescription drug bills.

It purports to allow the export of American products to Cuba, yet it makes it virtually impossible for family farmers to arrange the financing that enables such sales to take place. Moreover, the legislation is designed to impose new restriction on our efforts to foster people-to-people contacts and bring reform in Cuba.

It also includes objectionable trade provisions and doesn't restore food stamps for legal immigrants. And it contains fewer resources than I requested for clean water for farms and for climate change.

Nonetheless, I decided that, on balance, this bill advances the interests of the American people. That's why I signed it, and that's how progress is made, when we work together and have honorable compromise. No one gets everything he or she wants.

I still have the feeling the congressional majority has not yet decided whether they want to work with us in this way on the remaining bills, or just score points and leave town. On Medicare, we sent the majority a very detailed proposal. We said when it comes to more resources, the priority should not be HMO's but teaching hospitals, rural hospitals, home health agencies, children with disabilities, and pregnant women and children who are legal immigrants. The congressional leadership so far has virtually ignored that proposal.

The story is the same on taxes. We put forward a good-faith compromise and then offered to work to craft a bipartisan tax bill that meets the test of fairness to children, to seniors, to millions of Americans without health coverage, and to small business. The answer we got was disappointing: Instead of meeting with us, instead of working with the White House and/or congressional Demo-

crats, the Republican leadership instead crafted their own partisan tax package and passed it on largely a party-line vote.

Again I'm asking the congressional leaders to instruct their tax negotiators to meet with ours tomorrow, so we can find common ground on tax relief for America's families. We don't yet know how the education and health bill will work out. I hope the majority doesn't choose the path they took on the tax bill, or the Commerce/State/Justice bill, for that matter. Instead, we should do what was done on the agriculture bill I signed today; on the VA/HUD bill; on the Interior bill—the bipartisan path that invariably leads us to progress.

We said very specifically what our schools need—smaller class sizes and modern classrooms, investments in accountability, turning around failing schools, and teacher quality. There's no secret about what the right course is. Our priorities are clear, and we're ready to work with them in good faith, just as we have on all other bills.

Again this morning, Congress voted for a stopgap spending bill for today and quickly left town for the weekend. That's like going to work in the morning, punching the clock, and going back home. Our budget team is working all weekend, ready to meet. We need to come together on a budget, meet on Medicare, work out a fair tax cut bill, raise the minimum wage, and pass the new markets legislation.

Tonight we turn back the clocks, and we gain an hour. We ought to put that extra hour to good use. We're here; we're ready; and we need to finish the job.

Thank you.

Relations With Congress

Q. Mr. President, does it bother you that your insistence on just single-day extensions of the emergency spending bill has provoked considerable anger and irritation on the Capitol? Trent Lott says it's humiliating. Arlen Specter said you're intimidating Congress—I'm sorry, Trent Lott said it was harassment. Does that bother you? Do you think this works against you?

The President. Well, I hope not. I'm not trying to harass them. I'm just trying to get them finished and get out of town. They want

to go home and campaign, and they have a right to. They need to campaign, but they need to finish their jobs.

And I think it's highly—it's frustrating for Senator Lott because the real problem here is that the rightwing of the Republican caucus in the Senate so far has not permitted the Republicans to meet with the Democrats and work out a compromise on these last bills, as we have on all the others.

Now, we're working together on the Labor/HHS bill, which is the education bill and human services bill. But on the tax bill and on the appropriation for Commerce/State/Justice, they haven't permitted him to work with us. And he's in a very difficult position. I'm very sympathetic with him. I'm not trying to harass them. But if we kept passing these 4- and 5-day continuing resolutions, we'll just never get our work done. And they are coming back tomorrow night. Last week they came back on Monday night. So if we could make an agreement tomorrow night, they could be out of here by Monday, and that would give them—they could go home 8 days and take their case to the American people. That's all I'm trying to do.

Q. Mr. President, after you spoke out yesterday, the House Speaker said he believed you were being forced by House Democrats to veto the tax cut bill and to keep lawmakers in session in order to, A, prevent Republicans from getting a victory before election day, and also to force some confrontation for election-year gain. What do you say to the Speaker?

The President. Well, that's not true. I mean, look at what—I mean, I have—for 3 days in a row now, I have lavished praise on the Republicans, as well as the Democrats, where we have worked together. And in each case I've told you the things that I didn't agree with that they wanted in the bills that we accepted. So we're not trying to force a confrontation.

I will say again, look at the facts here. We haven't finished the education bill because we are still arguing over one issue, but I have not criticized them. We're working in good faith to try to work through this.

There are two pieces of legislation, and two only, in this entire Congress that they basically have refused to meet with us on.

They said, "We heard you, and here's the best we can do. Take it or leave it." And they're in that position because of the power of the rightwing of their caucus in the Senate and the House. And I understand; it's a very difficult thing for them. I am not trying to provoke a confrontation here. But these are the only—I will say again, the facts are clear. These are the only two bills on which we have not had a bipartisan negotiation.

All we're asking for is to do these bills the way we did the others. They'll get some of what they want; we'll get some of what we want. We'll have an agreement. It will be, on balance, good for the American people. I will say that. Then they can go home and make their case about what else they want to do; the Democrats can go home and make their case about what else we would like to do.

All I'm trying to do is get the job done here, and all I'm asking for is we treat these bills the same way we treated every other one.

Continuing Appropriations Legislation

Q. Mr. President, is it your position that you'll sign one-day CR's until you get a Labor/HHS bill, or that you'll only sign one-day CR's until you get a Labor/HHS bill, a tax proposal, and a Medicare—[inaudible]?

The President. Well, first of all, we've got to finish the education bill. But what I would—my preference, my strong preference is to finish it all. Let me just go back to—your question is tied to the previous one. It is not true that I do not want a tax bill before the election. That is not true. I believe we should give some tax relief. I am more than willing to do it, but I cannot in good conscience do something that I think is unfair and that will aggravate some of the problems that it purports to solve.

All I'm asking for here is what I have done every single year I've been here. I just want—if you go back, ever since we've had divided government, whenever we have negotiated, we have reached agreement; we've done things that have been good for America, starting with the welfare reform bill in '96; we had the Balanced Budget Act in '97; we had the Telecommunications Act, which has

been an incredible boon to our economy; and many, many other things.

And this year, because we've been fiscally prudent and we've got some funds to invest in America's future, we have made some truly astonishing steps forward for our country. All I am asking for is the same method of working out the bill, on the last two remaining bills that we got on the other bills, and a good-faith conclusion to the work we're doing on the education bill. That's all I'm asking for.

President's Role in 2000 Election

Q. Mr. President, one question about the campaign, if I might. There are reports today that Vice President Gore has communicated to you that he would like you to steer clear of the battleground States of Pennsylvania and Michigan. Is that true? And do you think you'd be a political liability, or does he think that, if you went there?

The President. Well, I said yesterday, generally—remember what I said yesterday? Let me just go back through this. I think, in general, these elections are always decided by the candidates and the case they make to the people. I actually, as I said, I may be the only person that's involved in this debate who has experienced this situation in reverse—when President Reagan was immensely popular and came to Arkansas in '84 to campaign. And when the votes were counted, he had 62 percent, and I think I had 63.

So what a President who is not running—there are only two things a President who is not running can do. You can tell people what you think the condition of the country is and what the stakes are, and you can try to rally the people that are already with you in the hope of getting a bigger turnout. The undecided voters will be swayed primarily by the others.

And what I have to hope is that wherever I go, that what I have to say is more important than just the fact of my being there. Because you're going to decide who you want to be the next President; Mark is going to decide; all of you are going to decide, and very few third parties can change your mind. So that's not what is at issue here. The most important actors in this drama are Al Gore

and Governor Bush. They're the only actors in the drama that really have any sway here—except for Senator Lieberman and Congressman Cheney; I think they can have some impact.

And the rest of us might be able to sway some undecided voters if our arguments are heard—and I have an understanding of this that's unique because I've been President the last 8 years. I may—we haven't decided everywhere I'm going yet, and I may still go to Michigan. If they want me to come and the campaign thinks it will be helpful, I'll go. But what I have to do is what I think will be most helpful. The President, if your arguments are heard and people listen to them, you may sway a few undecided voters. But the fact of your going is not a vote getter, ever. That wasn't for any previous President. It wasn't for President Reagan. But it does help if you can turn out your votes.

So we're looking at all the best ways we have to try to make sure all the people who are for our side and agree with us actually show up. That's very important. The Republicans are doing the same thing. And we'll just see what happens. I'll do whatever I think is best, in consultation with the campaign. But I don't think the final travel schedule has been set yet, and I think we just have to wait and see how things unfold the next few days.

Also, as I said yesterday, I have to finish this work here. And as you know, we're watching events in the Middle East very closely. So if I can be helpful, I will. I've already done a lot the last year, and I've done a lot in the last few days. I will continue to do what I can. But the first priority for me has to be here, and the election will be determined by, I believe, the case made by the two candidates for President in the next few days. And I think the rest of us, all we can do is hope to sway a few undecided voters if they hear us, and get the folks out that are already for us.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:17 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Ronald Reagan; and Republican Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates Gov. George W. Bush and Dick Cheney.

**Statement on Signing the
Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and
Related Agencies Appropriations
Act, 2001**

October 28, 2000

Today I am signing into law H.R. 4461, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for FY 2001. I commend the Congress for presenting me an acceptable version of this bill that provides critical funding for our Nation's farmers and ranchers, improves the safety of our food supply, and provides assistance to low-income families and rural communities.

I am pleased that the Act fully funds my Food Safety Initiative at \$383 million, a \$57 million, or 17 percent, increase over FY 2000. These funds will improve food safety for all Americans by allowing the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to increase surveillance activities and inspections of domestic and imported food, accelerate responses to outbreaks, and perform vital research on ways to reduce pathogens in food so that we can advance a more science-based food inspection system. I also commend the Congress for dropping the objectionable language provision that would have prevented USDA from fully implementing the Egg Safety Action Plan that I announced in December 1999. This will now allow USDA and FDA to vigorously pursue the goal of cutting in half the number of salmonella illnesses from eggs.

While the Congress did not provide the full amount of my requested increase for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, thereby failing to ensure that this vital program can achieve the goal of 7.5 million participants, the program will be able to serve a monthly average of just over 7.3 million individuals. I am pleased that the Act adopts my proposal to expand the vehicle allowance for the Food Stamp program, which will assist the many working poor families for whom owning a vehicle is the one item that makes them ineligible for food stamps. In addition, the Act will provide a much-needed increase in nu-

trition assistance for low-income families with high housing costs, by increasing the Food Stamp program housing allowance. The two changes mean that families do not have to choose among buying food, paying their housing costs, or having a more reliable car. However, I am disappointed the bill did not restore food stamp eligibility for certain legal immigrants, as proposed in my Budget.

Loans and grants for priority rural development programs will increase under the Act to \$9.9 billion this year, a \$2.7 billion increase over FY 2000. These funds will help diversify the rural economy, improve the quality of life in rural communities, and bring more rural areas across the "economic divide" that separates too many parts of the country from the historic economic expansion underway. I am especially pleased that the Act includes several of my proposals to address geographic areas of rural America that have long struggled with persistent poverty, including \$34 million targeted to Indian reservations for health clinics, child care centers, water systems, and job opportunities; and \$10 million for the Mississippi Delta Region to create better job opportunities and strengthen local financial intermediaries. The Act will also provide over \$100 million in loans and grants to help close the "digital divide" by financing local Internet service and broadband transmission in rural areas.

The Act increases USDA's conservation technical assistance to farmers and ranchers by over \$50 million from the FY 2000 level. Part of these funds will be used for a one-third increase in technical assistance to producers who are improving their animal waste management systems, as part of my Clean Water Action Plan. I am disappointed, however, that the Act cuts financial assistance for these and other conservation projects through the Environmental Quality Incentives program, and provides none of the funds I requested for the Farmland Protection Program that preserves farmland and helps communities manage urban sprawl. Also, while it is certainly helpful that the Act increases the Wetlands Reserve Program by 100,000 acres, it is far short of reaching the 250,000 acres per year I proposed for this program. I am hopeful that the next Congress and the next Farm Bill will recognize