

are helping the people down here want to see.

All in all—and then, finally, public housing restoration—it’s a big issue in New Orleans. It’s—but it’s an issue where there is a plan, and we just need to follow through on the plan.

So there are some hurdles, but this city has come a long way and—to the point where I felt very comfortable hosting the international conference with the President of Mexico and the Prime Minister of Canada. And I will tell you that not only did the leaders feel welcomed in New Orleans and feel comfortable in New Orleans and feel relaxed in New Orleans, but so did the delegations they brought with them. New Orleans is a great city to host a meeting or host a convention. They know what they’re doing down here. The city is recovered; it’s on its feet; and it’s bouncing back. And it is an honor to be back here.

And I want to thank you all for sharing your thoughts with me. And thank you for being leaders and helping this part of the—vital part of the country recover.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. at Galatoire’s Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana; Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA; Douglas V. O’Dell, Jr., Federal Coordinator, Office of Gulf Coast Rebuilding; Jim Letten, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana; President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico; and Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada.

Remarks on Arrival in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

April 22, 2008

The President. First of all, it’s good to be back in Baton Rouge, home of the LSU Tiger national championship football team. I had the honor of welcoming the team and Coach Les Miles to the White House, and it was a great honor for me, and I enjoyed it. And I do want to congratulate the good folks of Louisiana for supporting a football team that brought great credit to the game.

I’m here with the Governor—the great Governor of Louisiana to lend my support to John Kennedy for the United States Sen-

ate. 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 peoples’ 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, cause 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.

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

^{*} White House correction.

Statement on Congressional Action 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 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 all-time 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.

Proclamation 8243—Older Americans Month, 2008

April 22, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During Older Americans Month, we recognize the many ways older citizens have enriched our Nation through their character, wisdom, and love.

Our country remains strong because of the foundation our elders have helped lay. This year's Older Americans Month theme, "Working Together for Strong, Healthy, and Supportive Communities," highlights the importance of building partnerships to ensure that older Americans are able to live with dignity and independence.

Every week thousands of older Americans give back to their communities by volunteering through groups like Senior Corps. From teaching young children how to read, to helping provide relief to those affected by natural disasters, seniors play an important and compassionate role in our Nation.

My Administration is dedicated to ensuring that our seniors are treated with the respect they have earned. They deserve to have