

declaration on visa waiver. You, Mr. President, were the first to say that this is not a normal situation, when two nations have such confidence, when we have 200,000 Bulgarians living in the United States, more and more Americans coming to Bulgaria, to have this obstacle for normal human contacts. There is a way to go; there is work to do. But we shall do it together, and I believe that the sooner we achieve—make our business, the better for the citizens of the two countries.

And finally, thank you also for the supporting the reforms in the fight against organized crime and corruption. Bulgaria is a nation which became member of the European Union, which is modernizing. Our economic growth is excellent. Our performances in economy are good. And we see the reforms in fight against organized crime and corruption, the judiciary reform, as a very important further precondition for our economic growth and for the development of the nation.

And I remember that last year, you supported the establishment of the new State Agency for National Security. I can say with satisfaction that it is already operational. It works excellently with American services, and it has operations which are bringing concrete fruits. But there is work to do.

President Bush. Thank you for coming.
Prime Minister Stanishev. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Yes. Thank you. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:48 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the “Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008”

June 18, 2008

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 6124, the “Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.”

The bill that I vetoed on May 21, 2008, H.R. 2419, which became Public Law 110–234, did not include the title III provisions

that are in this bill. In passing H.R. 6124, the Congress had an opportunity to improve on H.R. 2419 by modifying certain objectionable, onerous, and fiscally imprudent provisions. Unfortunately, the Congress chose to send me the same unacceptable farm bill provisions in H.R. 6124, merely adding title III. I am returning this bill for the same reasons as stated in my veto message of May 21, 2008, on H.R. 2419.

For a year and a half, I have consistently asked that the Congress pass a good farm bill that I can sign. Regrettably, the Congress has failed to do so. At a time of high food prices and record farm income, this bill lacks program reform and fiscal discipline. It continues subsidies for the wealthy and increases farm bill spending by more than \$20 billion, while using budget gimmicks to hide much of the increase. It is inconsistent with our objectives in international trade negotiations, which include securing greater market access for American farmers and ranchers. It would needlessly expand the size and scope of government. Americans sent us to Washington to achieve results and be good stewards of their hard-earned taxpayer dollars. This bill violates that fundamental commitment.

In January 2007, my Administration put forward a fiscally responsible farm bill proposal that would improve the safety net for farmers and move current programs toward more market-oriented policies. The bill before me today fails to achieve these important goals.

At a time when net farm income is projected to increase by more than \$28 billion in 1 year, the American taxpayer should not be forced to subsidize that group of farmers who have adjusted gross incomes of up to \$1.5 million. When commodity prices are at record highs, it is irresponsible to increase government subsidy rates for 15 crops, subsidize additional crops, and provide payments that further distort markets. Instead of better targeting farm programs, this bill eliminates the existing payment limit on marketing loan subsidies.

Now is also not the time to create a new uncapped revenue guarantee that could cost billions of dollars more than advertised. This is on top of a farm bill that is anticipated to cost more than \$600 billion over 10 years.

In addition, this bill would force many businesses to prepay their taxes in order to finance the additional spending.

This legislation is also filled with earmarks and other ill-considered provisions. Most notably, H.R. 6124 provides: \$175 million to address water issues for desert lakes; \$250 million for a 400,000-acre land purchase from a private owner; funding and authority for the noncompetitive sale of National Forest land to a ski resort; and \$382 million earmarked for a specific watershed. These earmarks, and the expansion of Davis-Bacon Act prevailing wage requirements, have no place in the farm bill. Rural and urban Americans alike are frustrated with excessive government spending and the funneling of taxpayer funds for pet projects. This bill will only add to that frustration.

The bill also contains a wide range of other objectionable provisions, including one that restricts our ability to redirect food aid dollars for emergency use at a time of great need globally. The bill does not include the requested authority to buy food in the developing world to save lives. Additionally, provisions in the bill raise serious constitutional concerns. For all the reasons outlined above, I must veto H.R. 6124.

I veto this bill fully aware that it is rare for a stand-alone farm bill not to receive the President's signature, but my action today is not without precedent. In 1956, President Eisenhower stood firmly on principle, citing high crop subsidies and too much government control of farm programs among the reasons for his veto. President Eisenhower wrote in his veto message, "Bad as some provisions of this bill are, I would have signed it if in total it could be interpreted as sound and good for farmers and the nation." For similar reasons, I am vetoing the bill before me today.

George W. Bush

The White House,
June 18, 2008.

Remarks at the President's Dinner *June 18, 2008*

Thank you very much. Thank you for the warm welcome. Good evening. I appreciate

that kind introduction, Jeb, and I thank you for bringing Melissa too.

It's my honor to be with you. I can't thank you enough for coming to support our candidates running for the United States House, the United States Senate, and for the White House.

I appreciate my friends from the Congress who are here. I especially want to pay tribute to Senator Mitch McConnell, Senate Republican leader; Congressman John Boehner, House Republican leader; Senator John Ensign, the chairman of the NRSC, who, by the way, brought his son, Michael; Congressman Tom Cole, chairman of the NRCC, a man who deserves a lot of credit, along with Jeb, for tonight's success; my friend from the State of Utah, Senator Orrin Hatch. I thank the RNC chairman, Mike Duncan; all those here at the head table for their leadership in making this an incredibly successful event.

Most of all I want to thank you all for coming, for giving of your time and your money to help us achieve a big victory in November of 2008.

This is my eighth President's Dinner—also known as my last dinner before mandatory retirement. [*Laughter*] I can't say for sure what I'm going to be doing next year. I suspect I'll be in Crawford, watching the Rangers on TV. But I know what you'll be doing. You'll be holding this dinner in honor of a new guest: President John McCain.

I know John McCain well. I have worked with him, and I have run against him. Take it from me: It's better to have him on your side. [*Laughter*]

The stakes in this election are high. I know the pressures of the Oval Office: the daily intelligence briefings, the unexpected challenges, and the tough decisions that can only be made at the President's desk. In trying times, America needs a President who has been tested and will not flinch. We need a President who has the experience and judgment to do what is right, even when it is not easy. We need a President who knows what it takes to defeat our enemies. And this year, there is only one man who has shown those qualities of leadership, and that man is John McCain.