

self-reliant and interdependent, and that is a lesson that Thoreau learned that we can learn from him today. And in a world that is getting smaller and smaller and smaller, it is a very important lesson, indeed.

Finally—I love this quote, so I want to close with it. We have to understand that in a fundamental, moral way we are interconnected not only with nature but with all other people, and that any attempt to define ourselves in a way that elevates us at someone else's expense—any effort anywhere in the world by people to put themselves in a group that can only succeed if they're putting someone else down is wrong and, in this world, unaffordable. Listen to what Thoreau said: "Let us settle ourselves and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of prejudice and delusion till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place which we can call reality."

It is a great mistake to think this man was just a dreamer. Like all truly wise people, he understood that altruism was the ultimate form of enlightened self-interest, that no one can pursue self-interest and material things devoid of a heart or a spirit.

Today we still have a whole lot of "mud and slush of prejudice and delusion" in this and every other society. With all our prosperity, we still can't afford it; there is too much to be done.

So let us hope and pray that Walden Pond will flourish. Let us hope and pray that people will come to these woods forever from now on to learn not only more about themselves and their relationship with nature but the proper order of human society and the responsibility of every citizen to preserve it. If that happens, Don Henley and all of his cohorts will have given an astounding gift to America's future.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. on the lawn of the Institute. In his remarks, he referred to musician Don Henley, founder, and Kathi Anderson, executive director, Thoreau Institute; actor Ed Begley, Jr.; singer Tony Bennett; musicians Jimmy Buffett and Joe Walsh; and President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **Statement on the House of Representatives Republican Budget Proposal**

*June 5, 1998*

Over the past 5 years, we have followed an economic strategy of fiscal discipline coupled with smart investments in education, health care, and the environment. That strategy has eliminated the deficit and helped spur economic growth and the creation of more than 16 million new jobs. The House Republican budget is an unfortunate step backwards that would mean severe and unnecessary cuts in education, the environment, and health care. At a time when Washington is seeing its first surplus in almost 30 years and spending as a share of the economy is at its lowest level in a quarter century, this budget is not the right approach. As Congress readies its final budget, I urge Members to continue our strategy of fiscal discipline and strategic investments to prepare our country for the 21st century.

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

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

*June 5, 1998*

I commend the House of Representatives for joining the Senate in passing by an overwhelming majority the bipartisan agriculture research bill. This legislation restores benefits to thousands of deserving legal immigrants who will now be able to rely on much-needed food stamp assistance. It builds on our success last year in reversing harsh cuts in SSI and Medicaid benefits for legal immigrants that had nothing to do with our goal of moving people from welfare to work. With these actions, the Congress has gone a long way toward fulfilling the commitment I made to reverse this unfair treatment of legal immigrants. At the same time, the bill funds crucial agricultural research, crop insurance, and rural development priorities which will strengthen the farm safety net and enhance the quality of life in rural America.