

leadership and committed international assistance achieved great results in Chernobyl. I urge Ukraine to stay on the path of reform it set out upon last year. Former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt once noted that “it is only through strife, through hard and dangerous endeavor, that we shall ultimately win the goal of true national greatness.”

I firmly believe that Ukraine’s national greatness rests in Europe and in its transatlantic and global ties. The United States stands ready to work with Ukraine as it undertakes the political and economic reforms necessary to build these ties that are so vital to the brighter future Ukrainians seek for themselves and their children.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Legislation Regarding Unborn Victims of Violence

April 26, 2001

America’s children represent our greatest hope for the future. I commend the House for its bipartisan passing of the “Unborn Victims of Violence Act,” which will make it a separate felony to harm an unborn

child in the course of committing any one of 68 Federal offenses. This legislation affirms our commitment to a culture of life, which welcomes and protects children.

Remarks at a Celebration of Reading in Houston, Texas

April 26, 2001

The President. Thank you all very much. Thank you very much. Laura and I are really glad to be back in Texas. [*Laughter*] I didn’t realize, Dad, until I saw that video, how different your life has been since I’m the President and you’re not. [*Laughter*] Sounds like it’s been pretty rough. And perhaps you and I should sit down and have a discussion, talk about it. Let me think: I have an opening the 27th of September. [*Laughter*]

We have some other family issues to discuss, like where to put my Presidential Library. [*Laughter*] I’ve decided not to go through the hassle of raising money. And so, you know my dad’s library? We’re just going to add “And Son.” [*Laughter*] As you can already tell, lately my dad has been calling me “43.” I call him “41.” It’s kind of shorthand we have in our family. And

we have a nickname for Mother as well. To show you where she stands in the power structure of this family, we call her “Number One.” [*Laughter*]

And so I’m going to turn the stage back to Number One, and then close the program with some remarks of my own. It’s really great to be back in Houston and to return bearing the proudest title ever been given to me: Son of Barbara and George Bush.

[*At this point, the program proceeded.*]

The President. Well, thank you. Thank you, Laura. Once again, thank you all for that warm welcome. I know all of you join me in thanking the authors for being here tonight. The readings were fantastic, and we appreciate it.

You’ve certainly set a high standard for a little reading I intend to do tonight.

[*Laughter*] Now, some people think my mom took up the cause of literacy—[*laughter*—out of a sense of guilt over my own upbringing. [*Laughter*] That’s one reason why she was so happy I married a teacher.

The truth is, I guess I could have paid a little closer attention when I was in English class, but it all worked out okay. [*Laughter*] I’m gainfully employed. [*Laughter*] And I even have a new book out, and I brought along a copy. Right, here it is. I didn’t actually write all of this, but I did inspire it. [*Laughter*] Some guy put together a collection of my wit and wisdom—[*laughter*—or as he calls it, my accidental wit and wisdom. It’s not exactly a world transformed, but I’m kind of proud that my words are already in book form. [*Laughter*] And I thought tonight I would share a few quotable passages with you. It’s kind of like thoughts of Chairman Mao—[*laughter*—only with laughs and not in Chinese. [*Laughter*]

Here’s one. And I actually said this. [*Laughter*] “I know the human being and fish can coexist peacefully.” [*Laughter*] Now, that makes you stop and think. [*Laughter*] Anyone can give you a coherent sentence, but something like this takes you to an entirely new dimension. [*Laughter*]

Here’s another: “I understand small-business growth; I was one.” [*Laughter*] My, do I love great literature.

I said this up in New Hampshire: “I appreciate preservation. It’s what you’ve got to do when you run for President.” [*Laughter*] “You’ve got to preserve.” You know, I really don’t have the slightest idea what I was talking about there. [*Laughter*]

You know, a lot of times on the campaign, they asked me about economics, and I actually said this. “More and more of our imports come from overseas.” [*Laughter*]

Now, most people would say this when they’re talking about the economy: “We ought to make the pie bigger.” [*Laughter*] However, I said this. [*Laughter*] “We ought to make the pie higher.” [*Laughter*] It is

a very complicated economic point I was making there. [*Laughter*] But believe me—believe me, what this country needs is taller pie. [*Laughter*]

And how about this for a foreign policy vision: “When I was coming up, it was a dangerous world. And we knew exactly who the ‘they’ were.” [*Laughter*] “It was ‘us’ versus ‘them.’” [*Laughter*] “And it was clear who the ‘them’ was.” [*Laughter*] “Today, we’re not so sure who the ‘they’ are”—[*laughter*—“but we know they’re there.” John Ashcroft, by the way, attributes the way I talk to my religious fervor. In fact, the first time we met, he thought I was talking in tongues. [*Laughter*]

Then there is my famous statement: “Rarely is the question asked, is our children learning?” [*Laughter*] Let’s analyze that sentence for a moment. [*Laughter*] If you’re a stickler, you probably think the singular verb “is” should have been the plural “are.” But if you read it closely, you’ll see that I’m using the intransitive plural subjective tense. [*Laughter*] And so the word “is” are correct. [*Laughter*]

Now, ladies and gentlemen, you have to admit, in my sentences, I go where no man has gone before. [*Laughter*] But the way I see it is, I am a boon to the English language. I’ve coined new words, like “mis-estimate” and “Hispanically.” [*Laughter*] I’ve expanded the definition of words themselves, using “vulcanize” when I meant “polarize,” “Grecians” when I meant “Greeks,” “inebriating” when I meant “exhilarating.” [*Laughter*] And instead of “barriers and tariffs,” I said “terriers and bariffs.” [*Laughter*]

We all make our contributions in the world, and I suppose mine will not be to the literary treasures of the Western civilization. [*Laughter*] But I do hope to contribute in my own way. And one of those ways is to bring closer the day when every child and every American learns to read. And that is why the budget I submitted to the United States Congress triples the

amount of money available for reading programs all across America.

I'm proud of Mother. She took up the cause more than a decade ago, and she didn't leave it behind in the White House. Through her efforts and the efforts of all who have helped the Barbara Bush Foundation, so many lives have been enriched with new opportunities.

We heard Norma Vargas beautifully describe the good that has come into her life since she has found the courage to walk into that San Jose classroom to begin her first lesson. Tens of thousands more have their own stories, stories of people finding new and better jobs and gaining a new sense of dignity because now they can read.

And I'm proud that Laura has her own commitment to education. She was a teacher when I met her. In her own way, she

will always be a teacher. She's the best kind of teacher, too, the kind who leaves no one out and believes in the possibilities of every person.

That's the spirit of your cause and ours. I thank each of you for all you have contributed. It will be repaid many times over in lives of new achievement and lives of new hope.

Thank you, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:04 p.m. at the Wortham Theater Center. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of former President George Bush, former First Lady Barbara Bush, First Lady Laura Bush, and former Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom.

Remarks at the Dedication of the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin, Texas *April 27, 2001*

Thank you, Governor; and thank you, Jan, very much for having Laura and me. We're sure glad to be home. I love my work; I really do. I love what I'm doing. But I've got to confess, I miss my friends in Texas, and it's good to see so many of my friends here today. It's also good to be here with members of the Bullock family and the many whose lives he touched.

Governor Perry, I appreciate the job you're doing here in Texas. Some of you may recall that I had mixed feelings about leaving the Governor's office, but it was easier knowing that I was leaving the State in pretty darn good hands. And when I decided to leave, I joined the former Governors club. I'm your newest member. But I see three of the members here today, Governors Briscoe, Smith, and Clements, and we're honored by your presence.

And representing the family of the 36th President is Lucy Baines Johnson. Laura and I live in your former home, and we look forward to the day we can welcome you and your lovely mom back to Washington.

It's good to be here with the Lieutenant Governor, and I congratulate him on his promotion. And of course, my friend the Speaker—it's great to see both Nelda and Pete; we miss you both a lot. I see a lot of other familiar faces here as well, members of the legislature—some of you smiling—*[laughter]*—some of those same old familiar scowls. *[Laughter]* And it's good to see a lot of other folks from back in the days when it seemed like everybody worked for Bob Bullock.

This is really a fine museum. Laura and I were honored to be able to tour it. It is magnificent. Everybody in Texas needs