

Jan. 22 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

knowledge be the cornerstone of our curriculum. And that's why I appreciate Reid Lyon and others, experts in the field of reading, for being here to help make sure our curriculum reflect that which works.

We're going to diagnose children early and correct problems when we find them. As importantly, I'm going to ask Congress to spend money on teacher training to make sure that our teachers, the heart and soul of the education system, have got the tools necessary to teach children to read.

I'm excited about working with the pros in the field of education. This is not a Republican issue; it's not a Democrat issue; it's not an independent issue; this is an American issue, and the most fundamental of all American issues. If the mission is to make sure the American experience touches every willing heart, every person in the country, it starts with making sure our children learn to read, and it starts with making sure children learn to read early. And one of the key initiatives that

we have been discussing is, how do we make sure that we get science-based reading instruction to the youngest of the young? One way is to make sure that Head Start has a reading component as a part of its overall mission.

So I want to thank you all for coming. This is a week where I'm going to, hopefully, focus the Nation's attention on public schools and how the Congress and the executive branch can work together to pass law and appropriate money that will enable Dr. Paige and myself to work on the noblest of all missions, that every single child be educated in America, and not one—I mean not one—be left behind.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:49 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to G. Reid Lyon, chief, Child Development and Behavior Branch, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Department of Health and Human Services; and Phyllis Hunter, consultant, Texas Reading Initiative.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Democratic Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

January 22, 2001

Legislative Agenda on Education

The President. Thank you all for coming this afternoon. I've had the honor of hosting a group of distinguished folks who have had experience with Government here, that happen to be of the Democrat persuasion. We had a discussion about—an advisory session about what to think about in Washington, about how to move issues such as education. We've spent a lot of time talking about education and how to get an education agenda moving forward in this important town.

I can't thank the former Senators and a man who has seen enough Klieglights

in his day to know what they're all about, and of course, the Ambassador and Bill Gray, the distinguished chairman of the United Negro College Fund, for being here. For me, it's been a very helpful discussion.

Ambassador Strauss said something that's really important and is so true. He reminded me that Democrats are just as patriotic about their country as Republicans, that there is good in everybody. And that's what I'm going to look for. This administration is going to seek the good in everybody and find that ability to come together for the good of the country, as well.

So I want to thank these distinguished citizens of the country for being here, people who brought class and distinction when they held power and set a good legacy for those of us who follow.

Thank you.

Mr. Ambassador, do you want to say something?

Former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Robert Strauss. I want to say, all of us are delighted to be here, and all of us are pleased that the President extended this invitation. I think that the

group not only is appreciative, but they've tried to be responsible to the discussion.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, how do you square your decision—how do you square your decision, Mr. President to—

The President. I'm not sure. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:25 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to William H. Gray III, president, United Negro College Fund. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement to Participants in the March for Life January 22, 2001

Good afternoon, friends and fellow citizens. Two days ago, Americans gathered on the Washington Mall to celebrate our Nation's ideals. Today, you are gathered to remind our country that one of those ideals is the infinite value of every life.

I deeply appreciate your message and your work. You see the weak and defenseless, and you try to help them. You see the hardship of many young mothers and their unborn children, and you care for them both. In so many ways, you make our society more compassionate and welcoming.

We share a great goal: to work toward a day when every child is welcomed in life and protected in law. We know this will not come easily, or all at once. But the goal leads us onward: to build a culture of life, affirming that every person, at every stage and season of life, is created equal in God's image.

The promises of our Declaration of Independence are not just for the strong, the

independent, or the healthy. They are for everyone—including unborn children. We are a society with enough compassion and wealth and love to care for both mothers and their children, to seek the promise and potential in every human life.

I believe that we are making progress toward that goal. I trust in the good hearts of Americans. I trust in the unfolding promise of our country—an expanding circle of inclusion and protection. And I trust in the civility and good sense of our citizens—a willingness to engage our differences in a spirit of tolerance and good will.

All of you marching today have never tired in a good cause. Thank you for your conviction, your idealism, and your courage. May God bless you all.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.