

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 19.

Remarks at the Capital Area Food Bank December 19, 2002

The President. Thanks. Be seated. Thank you very much. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. It is nice to be in a building full of food and full of love. We are honored to be here. Laura and I are here to send a message to our fellow Americans: We hope you love your neighbor as you would like to love—be loved yourself; that in this holiday season, let's commit ourselves to making it a season of service to others, others who might hurt, others who need food, others who can benefit from our kindness and generosity.

I love to tell people in this country—this is a fabulous country, in my judgment, the greatest country on the face of the Earth. And the reason why is because America is full of people who have got great hearts and great souls, people who are willing to serve something greater than themselves. My call for the holiday season is for people to serve your Nation by helping somebody in need, to join the—become a soldier in the army of compassion.

I want to thank the Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman, for her service to our country. Mr. Mayor, I appreciate you being here. It's nice to see you; appreciate you keeping the potholes around the White House—[laughter]. I'm honored that members of the city council are here. Thank you all for coming. It's a—[laughter]—it is a fantastic tribute to your government that you support programs such as this food bank, center for—for the eradication of hunger in

Washington, DC. I appreciate your strong statement and your deep concern.

I want to thank Lynn. Lynn Brantley is president and CEO of the Capital Area Food Bank. I appreciate your heart. I appreciate your organizational talents. I mean, after all, this is the center for distribution to hundreds of outlets to feed people who are hungry. I mean, not only does Lynn care a lot, but she has obviously got a pretty good—a capacity to organize. She had me in peaches and spinach. [Laughter] I want to thank Greg TenEyck, who is the chairman. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. I want to thank Barry Scher, who is the vice chairman. Thank you all for helping out and dedicating your time and efforts to make sure this program is viable and strong.

I think the thing we've got to understand here in the midst of all our plenty is that there are people who hurt, people who are hungry, people who need love, people who, when you hear the word "American Dream" have no idea what you're talking about. And if they do, they wonder whether or not that American Dream applies to them.

Our goal in America is to do everything we can to help those who hurt. And there is a role for government, no question about it. I like to say government can spend money, but government cannot put hope in people's hearts or a sense of purpose in people's lives. Government can help, but government should never crowd out the

great compassion we find in programs such as this right here.

Washington, DC, hurt as a result of the attacks of September the 11th. The economy suffered around here. Therefore, there are more who hunger, and there are less who are giving. The agencies involved with helping those in need, need our sustained help. This organization here attracts nearly 12,000 volunteers. I want to thank those who volunteer here. I want to thank you for what you do and thank you for being a part of the great fabric of compassion in America.

More Americans need to volunteer. There are ways to do so. The usafreedomcorps.gov on the web page is the place to look. You can call 1-877-USA-CORPS and find out ways that you can help. If you are interested in being a part of feeding those who hunger, this is a great place to come to. But you can find out on the web page other ways to help. People oftentimes say, "Well, I want to help. I don't know how." Well, we're trying to help you find out how.

I hope people around this country realize that agencies such as this food bank need money. They need our contributions. Contributions are down. They shouldn't be down in a time of need. We shouldn't let the enemy affect us to the point where we become less generous. Our spirit should never be diminished by what happened on September the 11th, 2001. Quite the contrary, we must stand squarely in the face of evil by doing some good. And part of doing good is not only dedicating your time and talent to help but to reach into your wallet so that those of us who hurt among us have a chance to heal and to be a part of the American experience.

Those who are poor, those who suffer, those who have last hope are not strangers in our midst. They're our fellow citizens. And in this time of joy, in the time of blessing, we've got to remember that. To make the season complete and the season

whole, we must help those who are in need.

One of the things you've got to—I hope you'll recognize about me is sometimes I get a little wordy; I admit that. But I hope you view me as a man of action as well. We've got over 29 Federal agencies, people within the agencies who have been called upon to help. And they are helping. And I want to thank the Federal employees who have heard the call to love their neighbor just like you would like to be loved yourself. We all have a responsibility, in high positions or low positions, to follow through with our—with words and deeds. And this administration is committed to fulfilling the great promise of the American experience.

Again, I want to thank you all for coming. You know, we live in a blessed land. We live in a fantastic, fantastic country. The goals for this country are peace in the world, and the goals for this country are a compassionate American for every single citizen. That compassion is found in the hearts and souls of the American citizens.

My call to the American people is, patriotism is more than just putting your hand over your heart. Being a patriot in America is serving something greater than yourself, is serving the greatest country on the face of the Earth by helping a neighbor in need.

May God bless this institution. May God bless the volunteers and donors and people who have made Capital Food Bank thrive. May God continue to encourage the spirit of giving and love. And may God bless America.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. in the warehouse. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.