

The executive branch shall construe section 1211, which purports to require the executive branch to undertake certain consultations with foreign governments and follow certain steps in formulating and executing U.S. foreign policy, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authorities to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs and to supervise the unitary executive branch.

As is consistent with the principle of statutory construction of giving effect to each of two statutes addressing the same subject whenever they can co-exist, the executive branch shall construe section 130d of title 10, as amended by section 1405 of the Act,

which provides further protection against disclosure of certain homeland security information in certain circumstances, as in addition to, and not in derogation of, the broader protection against disclosure of information afforded by section 892 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and other law protecting broadly against disclosure of such information.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
October 17, 2006.

NOTE: H.R. 5122, approved October 17, was assigned Public Law No. 109-364.

Statement on the Population of the United States Reaching 300 Million *October 17, 2006*

For more than two centuries, America has been a beacon of hope and opportunity for people around the world, millions of whom came here to live in freedom and make better lives for themselves and their families. Today we celebrate a significant milestone: The population of the United States has now reached 300 million. Our continued growth is a testament to our country's dynamism and a reminder that America's greatest asset is our people.

America is built on a shared love of freedom and a belief in the dignity and match-

less value of every human being. Our confidence in our people has carried us to ever greater achievements in all areas of human endeavor and allowed us to remain the world's most vibrant and innovative country. And so long as we insist on high standards in education, place our trust in the talents and ingenuity of ordinary Americans, and protect our freedoms, we will remain the land of opportunity for generations to come. We welcome this milestone as further proof that the American Dream remains as bright and hopeful as ever.

Remarks at Waldo C. Falkener Elementary School in Greensboro, North Carolina

October 18, 2006

Thank you very much, Madam Secretary. I've known Margaret, as she said, a long time, and I'm very proud of the job she's doing. She knows what she's talking about when it comes to the schools in America,

and she and I are going to work to make sure that every child gets an excellent education.

I want to thank the good folks here at Falkener for inviting the President to come.

As you can tell, it's not an easy thing—[laughter]—to host the President. It's like, the entourage is pretty big, a lot of security. And so for the school folks here, thank you very much for accommodating us. I've come because I appreciate the example you set.

One of the things I like to do is to herald excellence. So the first thing I want to say is, congratulations to the principal and the teachers and the parents for working hard to make this a fantastically interesting place for our children to go to school.

I want to thank—you know, they say to me, "What do you want from the schools?" I don't know if you recognize this, but we just had six Nobel Prize winners recently announced—America had six Nobel—all of whom went to public schools in America. And my hope as I travel through the halls of these schools—like this one—I'm meeting Nobel Prize winners of the future. It's a noble aspiration for all of us to aim for. And so I want to thank you for letting me come.

I'm going to talk about No Child Left Behind. I think you're about to find out I am a passionate advocate of this important law, because I know it can save children's lives and I know it can help us meet a national objective, and that is, every child getting a good education in every school throughout the country.

I bring greetings from Laura. Most people say, "I wish Laura had come and the old boy stayed home." [Laughter] She's actually in El Paso, Texas, today—I think she's in El Paso, Texas, today—I'm confident—I think that's what she told me—where a new school out there is opening up the Laura Bush Library. And well deserved, I want you to know, because she has a great passion for making sure that every child can read. So I bring, as best I can, her passion here to this important school.

I'm proud to be here with Senator Richard Burr from the great State of North Carolina. Thank you for working on us—

with—on educational excellence. I appreciate Virginia Foxx, the Congresswoman, who joined us as well. Amy Holcombe is the principal.

You might remember, I was a Governor of a State. And I used to say, education is to a State what national defense is to the Federal Government. And so I took my role as Governor and being involved in public school—just like Guy Hunt did—we overlapped as Governors, and we prioritized public education. And so I spent a lot of time with schools in Texas, and I learned one thing, that these little centers of excellence always depended upon having an aggressive principal, a principal who is willing to set high standards and not allow for mediocrity to set in. So, Amy, I want to thank you for your leadership and thank you for your hospitality.

I met Josette Hamrick, who is the teacher of the year. I congratulate you, Josette, for setting a good example. I think Josette is here somewhere—there she is. Thanks for being here. I also have recently gone to Mary Helen Parson's third grade school—third grade class. And Tom "Ned"—Tom Niedziela—he is a—both of whom are dedicated teachers. And so I want to say something about teaching. It is a noble profession. It is a necessary profession for this country. And for those of you who are teachers, I congratulate you and thank you for serving our country.

I oftentimes say to people that are asking me about—do you have any recommendations for what I should be doing, and my answer is, teach. And to parents I say, remember, you're the child's first teacher. As a matter of fact, schools succeed when a parent understands that teaching begins at home, and it makes the job of the classroom teacher so much easier. But I want to thank the teachers who are here, and thank you for setting a good example.

I want to thank the school board members who are here. I told the head of the school board and the other man on the school board, I said, "It's a pretty tough

job to be on the school board.” [Laughter] One fellow said, “Do you want to switch jobs?” I said, “You know, I don’t think so.” [Laughter] But thank you all for serving. Local control of schools is important in order to achieve educational excellence, and I’m going to talk a little about that in a minute.

I also landed today and met a lady named Michelle Gilmore. Michelle is—there you are. Thanks for coming. Michelle and her husband, Tiran, are here. Michelle volunteers as a mentor. If you are concerned about the future of North Carolina or concerned about the future of our country and you want to make a difference, become a mentor. It’s amazing what happens when an adult takes time out of her life, in this case, to say to a child, “I care about you, and I want to help.” The true strength of the United States of America lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens. And the amazing thing about our country is that there are millions of acts of kindness that take place on a daily basis, and it hasn’t required one government law.

And the reason I mention Michelle and the reason I welcomed her to Air Force One is because I want to, one, thank you as an individual, and remind people that you can serve America by loving a neighbor just like you’d like to be loved yourself. And I appreciate you being here, Michelle. Thanks for coming.

I like the fact that this—we’re at a school named for a civil rights pioneer. I happen to believe reading is a modern-day civil right, that if you cannot read, you cannot realize the great promise of the United States of America. That’s what I believe. And so I’ve come to this school because I believe schools should set high standards and insist upon results, like teaching a child to read. I don’t think it’s too much to ask in schools around the United States of America. I know what happens when a child can’t read at grade level. I know the despondency that can be caused if a child is just simply shuffled through a school.

Falkener is a magnet school. In other words, it’s a school that—I equate that with educational entrepreneurship. It means people are willing to try things differently. This school is one that, interestingly enough, has got a international baccalaureate program inherent in its curriculum. And that’s important because international baccalaureate programs are programs that set high standards for children in later years. So in other words, it’s kind of a pre-international baccalaureate experience, all aimed at making sure that a child who goes from here has a chance to even have a greater skill level than anticipated. So it’s interesting to be in a school that’s a magnet school, that has got a pre-international baccalaureate program.

We support magnet schools at the Federal level. First, let me just tell you my theory. Most education needs to be funded at the State and local level. I believe that is the proper role between the Federal Government and the State government. And yet there are incentive programs that come out of Washington; Title I money, for example, is an incentive program. We also have put money in our budget for magnet schools. As a matter of fact, the budget next year I’ve asked for has got about \$100 million for magnet schools. I think magnet schools are interesting concepts to—that the local folks ought to decide to use. And so there’s a little incentive from the Federal Government to encourage you.

I’m a—also understand, and I hope you do—I know those of you involved with public schools understand that we’re now living in a global economy. North Carolina understands that about as much as any State. What happens abroad affects the lives of our students in the near future. If a child in China gets a good engineering degree and a child in America doesn’t, it means China is likely to be more competitive in the 21st century. In other words, we’ve got to get education right not only

because it's a national responsibility but because we're in a global world. Whether we like it or not, there is competition for jobs of the future that are going to—that will take place. And therefore, it's important that we make sure that our children get a solid foundation early in order—so that our country can be competitive, as well as our children.

Now, let me talk about No Child Left Behind, because I'm really here to make clear to people in Congress, not only who are here but around the country, that the reauthorization of this important bill is going to be a top priority of mine. And it's not only just the reauthorization, it's the strengthening of the bill, and not the weakening of the bill.

There's been a lot of talk about No Child Left Behind Act. First, you've got to understand, it was a bipartisan effort. I readily concede that's a rare occurrence in Washington, DC, but nevertheless, Republicans and Democrats came together to get this important piece of legislation passed.

It said, "We'll spend more money at the Federal level, but in return, we expect results." It seems like a simple concept, but nevertheless, it was not inherent in the education programs out of the Federal Government. We just never really asked; we just assumed everything was fine. As a matter of fact, in many schools around the country, that's the way it was. If people said it was fine, it was fine.

You know, I remember, one time, going to a school in Houston, Texas, and I said to the teacher, "How's everything? Thanks for teaching." She said, "My kids can't read." I think it was ninth or tenth grade. It was a shock to the Governor. It should be a shock to everybody when you hear a teacher say, my kids can't read by the time they get to high school. Something was wrong.

The point was made to me—and this is when Margaret and I started working on this concept of measurement—that if you don't measure, you don't know. And

the only way to prevent kids from just getting shuffled through schools—until the point where the high school teacher says they can't read—is to measure early. And so part of the No Child Left Behind Act says, "We expect results, and you measure."

I believe in local control of schools. I do not believe the Federal Government should be telling the people in North Carolina how to run their schools. I think that would be a mistake if that were the case. I don't think the Federal Government ought to design the test; the people of North Carolina should design the accountability tests. I do think the Federal Government ought to ask, "Can a child read?"

Look, I understand kids—I understand the debate; you know, "They're teaching the test." No, you're teaching a child to read so they can pass a comprehensive test. And if they can't pass a comprehensive test, something is fundamentally wrong. You know, "All we do is test." No, what you do is you teach so that the accountability system—when you do test, a child is proficient. You know, if you don't test, you don't know. And if you don't know, you can't correct. Active schools, schools that are meeting excellence are those that find problems early and solve the problems early, before it's too late. That's why I'm at this school. This school sets high standards.

And by the way, if you set low standards, guess what happens in schools? You get bad results. If you walk into a classroom full of the hard to educate and not have high standards, the hard to educate remains hard to educate. So the law says: Set high standards; use curriculum that works; you can determine what works by measuring whether or not students are meeting certain standards; and correct problems early, before it's too late. That's what No Child Left Behind is all about.

And it's working. It's working. You know, the first year this school was tested under No Child Left Behind, it didn't meet standards; like, it just wasn't good enough. This

school decided to do something about it. See, they recognized they had a problem, and so they used Federal funding to pay for new laboratories, teacher collaboration, research on what was going right and what was going wrong. There's a new focus on results; there was frequent testing; they set up a Saturday Academy for children with low test scores that needed extra help. And the results have been impressive. Four years ago, about 46 percent of third graders at this school were reading at grade level. That's okay if you're a parent of one of the 46 percent. It's not okay if you're a parent of one of the 54 percent. And the principal and the teachers understood there was a problem, and they took steps to change the status quo. And today, 76 percent are reading at grade level.

That's what No Child Left Behind does. It can't do the teaching; it can't be the leader; but it can help people who care deeply about the lives of a child—the life of a child to succeed, to recognize problems, address the problem, correct the problem, and teach a child to read. And that's what's—that's why I'm at Falkener. This is a school that has gone from mediocre to excellent, because they've used the tools of the No Child Left Behind Act.

In the fifth grade, about 68 percent of the students were reading at grade level 4 years ago; today, 88 percent of the students are reading at grade level. I cannot thank you enough for taking advantage of a law that really was living up to its name—no child being left behind. Here's what your principal said: She said, "Falkener has greatly benefited from this legislation. Our test scores tell our story of success."

I met Tom Ned—you call him "Ned," right?—Niedziela. He focused on reading comprehension and vocabulary, and his class made the largest reading gains in the fourth grade. One girl whose first language is Spanish—see, if the child's first language is Spanish, that child generally is what we call hard to educate. And sometimes that label becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Inner-city kids tend to be labeled hard to educate, so all that mattered in the past was, if you're 10, you're supposed to be here, and if you're 11, you're supposed to be there. It's unacceptable for this country, by the way. That type of attitude is unacceptable.

This child started the year reading at the second grade level. Thanks to Mr. Ned, she now reads at the sixth grade level. I met her. There's nothing more than helping a child's self-esteem than to—teaching a child to read, just giving that child the basic skills necessary to succeed in a hopeful society.

Here's what Mr. Ned said: He said, "I told them, if you want to be good at something, you've got to practice. If you want to play football, you have to go to football practice. If you want to be good at reading, you have to practice reading." And he said, "I've never had a class work so hard." I want to thank Mr. Ned; I want to thank the students. There's nothing more heartwarming than to know that standards are being met.

We see the results in No Child Left Behind across the State of North Carolina. I don't know if you know this or not, but your State has been an innovative State. Your State has been one that has not shied away from accountability. In other words, you didn't use excuses about testing. You said, "Look, we want to test because we want to know." Your State was the first in the Nation to establish an accountability system and one of the first to have the testing plans approved under No Child Left Behind. In other words, your State led. And I congratulate the State leaders and those involved with education for being bold on behalf of the children of your State.

Your test scores are encouraging. The percentage of fourth graders with basic math skills rose 10 points between 2000 and 2005. The percentage of eighth graders with basic math skills rose about six points between 2000 and 2005. African American

fourth and eighth graders in North Carolina achieved some of the highest math scores in the Nation. How do we know? Because we measure.

It's got to make you feel good to hear African American kids are scoring some of the highest tests in the Nation. Can you imagine if the President came and said, "By the way, your kids are scoring the lowest scores in the Nation"? I suspect you'd want to be doing something about that. At least I would hope you would.

There are good results of No Child Left Behind across the Nation. In other words, we're measuring—each State measures, and you're able to norm to determine how States do relative to each other. In reading, 9-year-olds have made the largest gains in the past 5 years than at any point in the previous 28 years. That's good. In math, 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds earned the highest scores in the history of the test.

We have an achievement gap in America that is—that I don't like and you shouldn't like. It's the difference between reading of African American students and Latino students and White students. The gap is closing, and that's incredibly important for the United States of America, to see that achievement gap close. How do we know? Because we're measuring.

Inherent in No Child Left Behind are some interesting reforms. First, if we find a child falling behind early, there is extra Federal money to help that child. Think about that. For the first time, the Federal Government has said, "Not only do we want you to measure, but when we find a child falling behind, there is extra money to be used in either the private or public sector."

See, measuring encourages parental involvement. If you measure and a parent finds out that his or her child is not succeeding, most parents are going to say, "Do something about it." And what the Federal Government has said, "Here's some extra money to help you, to get tutoring, to get you back up to grade level."

If a school continues to fail—in other words, a school doesn't make progress—I believe parents ought to be liberated from that school district if they so choose and go to another public school. In other words, there has to be a consequence at some point in time for a school that won't—is not teaching and won't change, if you expect there to be concrete results.

This school started off with low scores, set high standards, and has achieved the objective. I suspect not many parents, even if they could, would want to leave, because you're meeting—you're doing the job. There are schools around the country that are not doing the job, and that is unacceptable to society. It ought to be unacceptable to school boards and parents and teachers.

In DC, we started something interesting. We said that if the school fails, continue to—if there's persistent failure, that a child ought to be able to go to not only a public school but a private school. We provide what are called opportunity scholarships. We work with the mayor to enhance—it's an interesting opportunity—said, if you fail, and the school won't change, then the DC came up with a scholarship that said this scholarship could be redeemed at a public school or a Catholic school, for example.

There is a debate going on about whether we ought to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act. I think you can get a sense for where I'm coming from. Not only do I think we ought to reauthorize it, I think we ought to strengthen it. I think it would be a huge mistake for the United States Congress not to reauthorize this important piece of legislation. And the reason I say that is that it's working. In other words, there's just more than words there; we have achieved concrete results.

I'm not suggesting the law shouldn't be improved; it should be improved. For example, we ought to make sure that scores are tested early, particularly for big districts, so that people understand what the results are. Oftentimes in—I don't know how many big districts, Margaret—but I've

heard complaints from school districts where the test scores get posted for the parents after the school year begins, which is like—it doesn't work. So the bureaucracy, frankly, has got to be a little more facile in getting the results out, and Margaret understands that.

I think we ought to continue doing what we call the Teacher Incentive Fund. This is a further reform. It allows States and school districts to reward teachers who demonstrate results for their students. If this school board decides they want to provide incentives for teachers based upon results, the Federal Government will provide money to help you do that. I like the idea. You may not like it, and that's fine. You got elected a school board member; I didn't. But nevertheless, I do believe we ought to make sure that school boards and school districts have the option.

I also think there ought to be incentives for teachers who make the decision to teach in some of the needier school districts, tougher schools—to provide an incentive. We have got a program I'm going to work with Congress on to encourage math and science professionals to come into classrooms. And the reason why is, in order for us to be competitive in the future, our students have got to be proficient in math and the sciences, and we have to have more emphasis on math and science. And there's no better way to encourage a child to take math and science than to have a professional come in the class. We call them adjunct professors.

Margaret and I, one time, went over to a school in Maryland, and there were some people from NASA there, two science guys from NASA that could talk the language of science. And their message was, it's cool to be a scientist. Some pretty cool guys that were there, but they were saying to eighth grade kids, "Science is interesting for you." Sometimes it takes somebody in the field to be able to lend practical knowledge to convince children to continue to focus on science and math and engineering.

I talked to you about how to make sure parents get better information. I do believe we ought to fund a national opportunity scholarship program to make sure parents have choices—particularly poor parents have choices beyond just public school choice.

I'm worried about high school, and I think the new law ought to focus a lot on high school. Four out of every—one out of every four ninth graders in America does not graduate from high school on time. That's a problem. If we live in a global world that's highly competitive, our kids have got to get out of high school, and they got to head to community college or college, if we're going to be competitive. And so we need to bring the same standards to our high schools that we have brought thus far to elementary and junior high schools.

We need to test. If it's okay to test in the third grade, it ought to be okay to test in high school to determine whether or not curricula works, whether or not teaching methodology is working, and whether or not our children are learning.

Again, I told you about the international baccalaureate program. It feeds into another way for us to enhance the competitiveness of this country, and that is to encourage AP programs—Advanced Placement programs—throughout classrooms all across America. One of the bottlenecks is—a bottleneck is the number of teachers that are capable of teaching AP. I think it's a good use of your taxpayers' money to train teachers in Advanced Placement; 70,000 teachers—is our initial goal to train in Advanced Placement, so that teachers have the skills necessary to teach AP. But it works.

It's amazing what happens when you set high standards and give people the tools necessary to effect those standards. And so these are ideas and ways to strengthen No Child Left Behind. We'll continue to listen to good ideas. We, of course, will listen to Members of Congress from both parties.

This is a State that had a good idea. They were deeply concerned about how to make sure that the accountability system would measure progress without—in an accurate way. And so Margaret worked with the State leaders, worked with the Senator to provide flexibility for the accountability system, without undermining the whole concept of measurement. And so in other words, we'll be rational and reasonable, but what we will not do is allow schools to lower standards. And what we will not do is allow people to get rid of accountability systems, because I believe the accountability system is the first step in making sure no child is left behind.

I understand what it means for public schools to guess whether or not a child can read and write and add and subtract, and I understand fully the consequences of a system that guesses. I also understand the consequences of a system which meas-

ures, and a system which measures and corrects problems is a system which will help meet the great promise of this country.

I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come and talk about something I feel strong about, deeply passionate about. I'm looking forward to getting these elections behind us and start working on the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act, for the good of every child in the United States of America. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina; Alan W. Duncan, chairman, Guilford County Schools Board of Education; and Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Tour of Victory Junction Gang Camp, Inc., in Randleman, North Carolina October 18, 2006

The President. You know, it's a remarkable place. I can't tell you how thrilled I am to be with the Pettys and the champion race car drivers who have heard a call to help people who need help. And I wish our fellow citizens could see the physical layout here. And if you were here, you'd also feel a great sense of compassion. And, you know, the Petty family has been well known for a long time in America. And they've been known as great athletes—now they will be known as great humanitarians as well.

And so we really thank you.

Kyle Petty. Thank you, sir.

The President. This is a place that's in honor of their son, Adam. They have made a conscious decision to turn a tragic event into a loving event, and that's what I feel here. And you guys did a good job. Thanks for having me.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:56 p.m. in Adam's Race Shop. In his remarks, he referred to NASCAR driver Kyle Petty and his wife, Pattie, founders, Victory Junction Gang Camp, Inc.