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century's greatest humanitarians. Her worldwide ministry to the poor, the suffering, and the dying has served as an inspiration to all of us. With the enormous power of her humble faith and her lifetime of living it, she touched the lives of millions of people, not only in India but in our country and all around the world. Hillary and Chelsea will never forget visiting her mission in Calcutta, and we will always treasure the time we spent with her and be especially grateful for the home for abandoned babies she and her order opened in Washington, and the chance Hillary had to help in getting it established.

Anyone who ever met Mother Teresa could see that within her very small frame, she carried a very big heart, big enough to follow God's will to show compassion and love for all our children, especially the sick and the forgotten. Mother Teresa once said, ''The test at the end of life is not what you do; it is how much of yourself, how much love you put into what you do.'' Well, Mother Teresa put all of herself, all of her love, into serving mankind, and the world is a much better and nobler place because of how she lived.

The First Lady today is representing our Nation at the funeral of another woman of compassion, England's Princess Diana, whose tragic death a few days ago shocked and saddened millions around the world. The enormous outpouring of grief and support in the wake of Diana's death demonstrates that people saw in her more than her radiant beauty but, instead, a different kind of royalty. She became, as Elton John said at her funeral, England's rose, because she shared the life struggles of ordinary people, she cared about them. She was not too self-absorbed to lend her hand and her heart to people in pain or in peril, especially people with AIDS and the innocent victims of landmines.

Hillary and I liked her very much. She was a young woman of great gifts coming into her own, determined to raise her children to be well-grounded, strong young men, not isolated by their royal lineage, and determined to make a contribution to the people of Great Britain and the world. On her trips to Washington, Hillary talked with her about the challenges of parenting and Diana's civic commitments, her campaigns on behalf of children, for people with AIDS, and to ban landmines.

To our friends in Great Britain, I wish to express a special message of sympathy. Our two peoples who experienced so much together are experiencing this sad event together. Diana was not ours, but we grieve alongside you.

Mother Teresa and Princess Diana, two women of vastly different backgrounds and worlds, are gone. But each of them in her own way has shown us what it is to live a life of meaning through concern for others. That is the great legacy they leave us. Let us honor it. For whether we live to a ripe old age or must leave this life too soon, our time on Earth is short, and we live on only through the gifts we give to others who share the journey with us.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from Edgartown Elementary School in Martha's Vineyard, MA.

Remarks at Four Seasons Elementary School in Gambrills, Maryland

September 8, 1997

The President. Thank you very much. Jonathan, this is an important, good book for me to be reading. I've been reading a biography—right now, this morning, I was reading before I came to work—of President Grant, who was the commanding general of the Union forces in the Civil War. And I haven't gotten to the part about the *Monitor* and the *Merrimack* yet, so I thank you. So I can read this as long as I have it back by the 27th, huh? [*Laughter*]

Secretary Riley, Principal Leone, Governor Glendening and Lieutenant Governor Townsend, Senator Sarbanes. I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to my good friend Congressman Steny Hoyer; I know I'm in his district. And his late wife was a committed teacher of young children, and he wanted me to come here to his congressional district to make this announcement. And looking at you, I'm certainly glad I did. And I thank you for making me feel so welcome.

Secretary Riley asked how many people had read one book. I want to start by congratulating the star readers who are sharing the stage with me today. It is true that I have been an avid reader of books since I was your age, and it is also true what Secretary Riley said, that if you work hard and learn a lot, you have a good chance to live out your dreams, and you might grow up to be President. Once I was just sitting in an elementary school not very different from this, just like you.

I'm glad to be here today, especially because this is International Literacy Day, a day when people all over the world say we ought to be committed to making sure everyone can read. And one of the most important things we are doing, which your principal mentioned, is to support a program called America Reads. We're trying to get up to one million people all around the country to help parents and teachers make sure every single third grader in America can read independently by the end of that third grade. And I think that's a very good thing to do. It's obvious that all of you are doing that now.

Secretary Riley asked how many of you have read one book—anybody read five books, at least, this summer? Anybody read at least 10 books this summer? How about 15—any 15 books? How about 20? [*Laughter*] How about 25? Don't feel bad, I haven't read 25 books, either. [*Laughter*] You're out past me. How about anybody read more than 30 books this summer? Wow! Anybody read more than 40 books this summer? [*Laughter*] Anybody read 50 books this summer? Now, that's amazing. [*Laughter*] You need to tell me how you manage your time. I'd like to have some help on that. That's great. Well, give yourselves a hand—let's give everybody a hand for their reading. That's great. [*Applause*]

I came here today to talk about the importance of reading and learning, not only for you but for all the children in our country. How many of you know how to at least do a little work with a computer? Now, if I asked that in the White House, there wouldn't be that many hands go up. [*Laughter*] And you know that you're living in a time when the computer can do more and more and more things, right? And you probably know that someday before long, we probably will see telephones, televisions, and computers all combined into one thing. And you'll probably be able to carry it from room to room and hang it on the wall and get on the computer and talk to people all across the world, do research in libraries all across the world.

And this big explosion in what computers can do is changing the way people work and live and learn. And a lot of you will be doing jobs that are different from the jobs your parents are doing. A lot of you will wind up doing jobs that nobody has even thought up yet. They don't even exist yet. But what that means is, is that those of us who are your parents—and your grandparents' generation—we have a big obligation to make sure every single one of you can read well and can learn and can keep on learning for a lifetime because of the exciting world you're going to be living in.

If you have a good education, and especially if you can read, young people your age will be able to do more different things that they're interested in doing than any group of people who have ever lived in the history of human beings on the Earth. It will be a very exciting time.

You might be interested to know that this year there are more than 52 million young Americans in school—more than 52 million—the largest number of children ever in school in the history of America. And it's very important that we do what we can to help them.

Now, what that means for all of us who are in the Federal Government, like Secretary Riley and me and Senator Sarbanes and Congressman Hoyer, or people at the State level, Governor Glendening, the Lieutenant Governor, the other State officials who are here, or your local superintendents—that all means different things. Sometimes it means just giving the schools more money. For example, we have doubled the funding to try to provide the opportunity for every school in America to hook up every classroom in America to the Internet by the year 2000. I understand that you're all going to be hooked up, all your classrooms, by the end of this year, and that's very good. But we want every single student in America to

be in a classroom connected to the Internet by the year 2000.

We also have to do more than just spend more money. The other thing we're trying to do is to make sure that all of our children are learning more, starting with reading. I told you a minute ago that we have this America Reads program where we're giving young people, for example, who get scholarship money or work-study money in college—we're asking them to come out and work with people your age and read books with them and make sure everybody can learn to read.

And you probably know that we have more and more American students now who come from other countries, who are immigrants, or whose parents came from other countries. Right across the Potomac River in Virginia, from Washington, DC, there's a school district that has children from over 100 different racial and ethnic groups. They speak a lot of different languages. Many of them weren't taught to speak English. But they all must learn to read, and read well, and that's a huge challenge for our country.

Earlier this year, I told the Congress and the American people that if we didn't do anything else, we ought to make sure that no child got out of elementary school without strong reading skills and that all of our children acquired strong mathematics skills, because those are the foundations on which all other learning occurs. And to me, that means that we have to have national standards for reading, and we ought to measure those standards.

I want to—in 1999, I want to make sure we give a reading test to every fourth grader in America so we'll know if the children need help measuring up to national standards; we'll know if a class needs help; we'll know if a school needs help. Because you know as well as I do that I couldn't go to every grade school in America and ask how many read a book this summer and have everybody raise their hand. I couldn't go to every grade school in America and ask how many have read 5 books and have almost everybody raise their hand, and how many people have read 10 books and have a great majority of the children raise their hands. I couldn't do that.

But every child in America—every single child in America—needs to be able to read well and needs to be able to read independently by at least the end of the third grade, so that all this other learning can occur. That's what this whole national standards debate is about. We want everyone—students, teachers, principals, schools, school boards—to be held accountable and also to get the help and support they need if young people need more help in learning to read.

In Maryland here, where clear academic standards have been established and tests have been established to measure achievements, Four Seasons Elementary has posted impressive gains in reading scores. Just last week, Secretary Riley went to Philadelphia, where achievements have risen among all students at all grade levels because they set high standards and then they all were willing, all the students, to take a test to see whether they had met the standards. It wasn't a test to scare people. It was a test to help people to find out what they knew and whether they needed to learn more.

This should be something that has nothing to do with party politics. I think every American, Republicans, Democrats, independents, should favor high standards. I think people from all backgrounds should want all of our children to learn at a high level. And believe it or not, even though there are a lot of good things going on in America, and even though English and reading is the same in Maryland as it is in Montana, and mathematics is the same in California as it is in Maine, there is still no national standard to say whether every child has learned to read well enough. So that's what we're trying to do.

We are trying to establish a fourth-grade standard of reading and an eighth-grade standard of math by 1999 that will tell us all whether our children are learning what they need to know and, most important, will give you the assurance you need that your future is going to be bright if you work hard and learn what you need to know.

I want to thank Governor Glendening. He was the first Governor in the country to support the movement toward national education standards. And I thank Maryland's commissioner of education and all the others

who have supported this effort here in Maryland.

I also want to say this—I said this before—there are a lot of children in America whose parents weren't born here, a lot of children in America who themselves weren't born here, but there is no child in America who can't meet these standards. I believe all children can learn, don't you? Don't you believe all your classmates can learn?

Students. Yes!

The President. Don't you believe, if you get the help you need and if you work at it, you can learn what you need to know to make a success of your life?

Students. Yes!

The President. And don't you think you have a right to get the kind of education that will let you go as far as your dreams want?

Students. Yes!

The President. I do, too. And that's what this is about.

So I want to make sure all of our children are treated fairly. I want to make sure that all of them have the tools they need to achieve what they need to achieve. But I have found what I see here: When you expect high achievement from students, they always give it to you. And when you have low expectations of people, that's a mistake.

So I believe in you, and I believe in your future. These tests that we propose to give are voluntary. No school or school district will be forced to use them if they don't want to. But they will give us a sense of a national level of achievement in reading for fourth graders, in math for eighth graders. They'll be developed by an independent, bipartisan board. There's no politics in this, only our children.

But let me say this in closing, I'm not afraid of what America's children can do. I believe in what America's children can do. I'm not disturbed by the fact that we're becoming a more diverse country. I'm excited by it. After all, we're going to be living in a global society where we'll be tied to other nations by economic and cultural ties. And the fact that America is a great democracy that has people from everyplace else living here, as citizens, making their own way, is a good thing.

I imagine this student body here looks a little different than it would have if we'd had this picture taken 10 years ago. That's a good thing. We should be happy about our differences. But no matter how different we are, we all need to be able to read; we all need to be able to do math; we all need to be able to learn together. I am determined to see that you have a good future. But you have to do your part, which is to learn. And the only way you can do that is if your parents and the educators say, "Here is the standard. Here's what you should be learning."

I believe in your future. I have high expectations for you, and I see today that you believe in your future. Do you believe all children can learn to read?

Students. Yes!

The President. Do you think that all children should be expected to learn to read well?

Students. Yes!

The President. Would you like us to find out, so that if somebody is not reading well, we can teach them to read well?

Students. Yes!

The President. It would be unfair to leave somebody behind, wouldn't it?

Students. Yes!

The President. That's what I think, too. You keep reading, and we'll keep working.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the media center. In his remarks, he referred to Jonathan Knobel, fifth-grade student who introduced the President, and Lorna Leone, principal, Four Seasons Elementary School; and Gov. Parris Glendening and Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of Maryland.

Proclamation 7018—America Goes Back to School, 1997

September 8, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Americans want the best for our children. We want them to live out their dreams, empowered with the tools they need to make the most of their lives and to build a future