

Now, since we first issued those guidelines, appropriate religious activity has flourished in our schools and continuing in our country. Today I'm announcing the release of expanded guidelines, more practical help for teachers and principals, for parents and students, for the whole community. Guidelines like this will help teachers better understand how to teach about religions and help faith-based organizations join the effort to improve public education.

Across America, schools and faith-based organizations are telling us they want to build new and effective partnerships, like the large number of faith-based groups involved in America Reads or the Shiloh Baptist-Seaton Elementary School partnership, which offers after-school activities here in Washington, DC. Faith-based organizations in schools, though different in many ways, do often share important goals: expanding opportunities to learn, lifting children's lives. Our new guidelines will help them work together on common ground to meet constitutional muster, to avoid making students uncomfortable because they come from different religious traditions, while helping students make the most of their God-given talents. These guidelines also tell us that a consensus is emerging among educators and religious leaders and among defenders of the first amendment. So many of them have endorsed our efforts. Their voices echo the words of George Washington who said that Americans have, and I quote, "abundant reason to rejoice, that in this land every person may worship God according to the dictates of his own heart."

Today, as we count the days down to the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, we know that this fundamental and precious liberty is still strong. We are determined that it will remain so, not just for our own children but for generations yet to come.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Death of Grover Washington, Jr.

December 18, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Grover Washington, Jr., one of America's greatest musicians. I will always be grateful for the honor of playing saxophone with Grover back in 1993, after a White House jazz concert, and for the wonderful music he performed at my Inaugural celebrations and my 50th birthday celebration. Grover Washington was as versatile as any jazz musician in America, moving with ease and fluency from vintage jazz to funk, and from gospel to blues to pop. "I want to be able to visit any genre," he once said, "and converse there with my horn." Grover Washington did exactly that, and beautifully. I will miss both the man and his music. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Christine, and their two children, Grover III and Shana.

Statement on the Death of C. Vann Woodward

December 19, 1999

Hillary and I are deeply saddened by the passing of C. Vann Woodward, one of the most important and influential historians of our time. A native of Arkansas, Woodward not only wrote about history; he helped shape it. From living through and witnessing the era of Jim Crow to marching on Selma for racial justice, he brought a unique perspective to the teaching and analysis of Southern history. While in the eyes of most he will best be remembered for his many books, his Pulitzer prize, and his long and distinguished teaching career, I believe his greatest gift was his tenacious pursuit of the truth and his warm and generous spirit. Dr. King once called one of Woodward's books the historical bible of the civil rights movement. His work influenced generations of Southern historians and social activists and had a major impact on my own thinking. All Americans should look to the life and work of C. Vann Woodward, as we rededicate ourselves to

building one America in the 21st century. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Remarks at Maury Elementary School

December 21, 1999

Emissions Standards for Cars and Sport Utility Vehicles

Thank you very much. First of all, I would like to thank the principal of this school, Dale Talbert, for welcoming all of us here. And all the members of the Maury school community, thank you, and thank you for the nice sign there. And I want to thank the kids back here for being with me and with you today.

I want to thank Gloria Hackman for the fine statement that she made and for 20 years of dedication as a nurse. As a son and the grandson of a nurse, I liked hearing her speak. And I also want to say a special word of appreciation for the work being done here.

I want to thank Ed Zechman, the CEO of the Children's National Medical Center, for the wonderful work he does every day and, in particular, the last 7 years, the work that he and the First Lady have done together. And most of all, I want to thank Carol Browner, the EPA Assistant Administrator, Bob Perciasepe, and all the other people at EPA who worked so hard to make this day come about.

If you knew how many times over the last 7 years, in how many different contexts, Carol Browner had said to me, "You have got to do something to reduce incidents of asthma and other respiratory diseases among young children. We've got to keep doing it. It's the biggest problem out there most kids face." If you had any idea how many private encounters we had had on that that led to this happy day, you would be very grateful that someone like her is in public service in the United States, I'll tell you—thank you.

Vice President Gore has given me a lot of good ideas, as he always reminds me when we're together—[laughter]—but the recommendation to appoint her is surely one of the best.

Let me say another word about Gloria Hackman. She was here speaking not only for herself and out of her own experience

but in a way for all the children and families of this school and schools like it all across America and, particularly, on behalf of the children and families who struggle each day with the challenges of asthma. I want to commend everyone here who is working in the American Lung Association's Open Airways program for all that you do to help our children breathe a little easier. As these children know only too well, a simple breath of fresh air is not something you can take for granted.

You know, back at the beginning of our century, a little air pollution was considered a small price to pay for the bright economic future the industrial revolution was bringing us. In countless communities, in fact, black smoke billowing from the factory smokestack was a welcome symbol of newfound prosperity. It went on a long time. I remember when I first entered politics in Arkansas, there was a papermill you could smell 80 miles away. And people didn't like it 80 miles away, but where it was really strong in the community they'd say it was the smell of money. And that's what people believed.

But after a while, the air became so fouled in places like Pittsburgh that the streetlights had to be kept on during the day so people could see. Businessmen traveling to New York knew to bring along a second white shirt, even if they were staying just a day, because by the afternoon the first one would be coated with soot. Americans soon came to realize that dirty air was not just a nuisance, that it threatened their health and their lives.

In the decade since that realization came to pass, through the actions of Government and the ingenuity of American industry, we have made tremendous strides. In the last 30 years, we have reduced air pollution in the United States by nearly a third, even as our economic output has more than doubled. Over the past 6 years alone, 43 million more Americans breathe air that meets Federal standards. Every day, thanks to these efforts, we are preventing as a society 600 premature deaths and 2,000 cases of asthma and bronchitis—every single day. And I want to say—I'm going to say this 15 times before I sit down—if you have noticed, it hasn't done any harm to the economy. I am very grateful for the opportunity that Vice President Gore and