

country and to the universal cause of peace and human progress.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

George W. Bush

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NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 6.

Question-and-Answer Session at Lakewood Elementary School in North Little Rock, Arkansas

March 1, 2001

The President. Anybody got any questions for me?

President's Goals

Student. When our kids grow up and read about your Presidency in history books, what do you hope they'll read?

The President. Well, I hope they read that our country, our politicians are able to discuss differences in a civil way; that there's not a lot of anger in the political process; that you and I might disagree, but we can respect each other when we disagree. So I hope I've been able to help change the tone in Washington so people respect each other. I hope the reading test scores are the best in the world. I hope the world is at peace. I hope that boys and girls who dreamed about owning their own business will be able to do so in America, continue to do so. I hope that our Nation is one in which people who have dreams—regardless of where you're raised, whether you can speak English, whether your parents speak English as a first language or not, no matter what neighborhood you're from—will realize those dreams are possible if you make the right choices in life. So that's my ambitions for the country.

Decision To Run for President

Student. What made you run for President?

The President. Well, I thought I could do a better job than anybody else that was running for President. I was concerned about a country that was becoming too bitter at times. I'm concerned that the American Dream, the idea that you can be—have a dream and work hard to achieve it might not have—is bright for everybody in America, as I hoped. I'm worried that the education system in some places isn't working, concerned about a military that—the morale in the military wasn't high enough. I think we need to have a strong military to keep the peace. So I had some reasons for running, and now I'm working to achieve them.

One of the reasons I've come to your school is to be able to talk about education. I'm also talking about a budget plan. One of the things a President does is submit a budget to Congress—"here's where we ought to spend money, here's where we ought to"—and if you have any money left over, I'm arguing we ought to give it back to the people who pay taxes, like the teacher right here.

Now, one other thing my wife is going to do, by the way, is she's going to go around the country encouraging people such as yourself to think about being a teacher when you get older. There's nothing more important than being a teacher. So as you start to think about your ambitions and your possible careers when you get out of college, think about being a teacher. It's a very important profession.

The White House

Student. What is it like being President and living in the White House?

The President. It's a big honor. It's a big honor, as I'm sure you can imagine. It's a very exciting job. The White House is a majestic place. It's like a museum in many ways, and we're, of course, now turning parts of the White House into our home. And Laura and I are the proud parents of 19-year-old twin daughters, but they go to college so we don't see much of them anymore. But we do have two dogs and a cat living with us.

And so all five of us are adjusting to our new home. But it's an honor.

And I hope some day you'll come up to Washington and tour the White House, and you'll get to see where we live. It's a big honor.

Sam Houston Elementary School

Student. What school did you go to when you were our age?

The President. Sam Houston Elementary School in Midland, Texas. I was raised—you know where Texas is, of course. Most people in Arkansas know where Texas is, and all the people in Texas know where Arkansas is. Anyway, it's the State right south of here. But I lived in the western part of the State. Many people in Arkansas have got kinfolks generally in east Texas, and I lived out in west Texas, that's where I lived. And so I went to a place called Sam Houston Elementary School.

And I had no idea when I was your age that I would run for President of the United States. I, frankly, thought that what I wanted to be at the time is, I wanted to be a baseball player just like a guy named Willie Mays. He was my favorite player growing up. Then I realized I wasn't a very good hitter, so I wasn't going to be like Willie Mays.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:58 a.m. in classroom 15. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Leadership Forum in North Little Rock

March 1, 2001

The President. Well, thank you very much, Kaye. First, a good school depends upon the leadership of a good principal, and it didn't take me long to recognize, one, this is a good school, and two, Kaye Lowe is a good principal.

I want to thank our panelists for coming. It's—I really love going to schools and see the enthusiasm of the teachers and the bright eyes of the students. That certainly was the case here today. Before I begin, I want to thank the leadership of the State of Arkansas for coming, two fine United States Senators:

Senator Hutchinson and Senator Lincoln. I want to thank Vic Snyder for being here, as well.

Governor, I've got a message for you. And Lieutenant Governor, you requested that the FEMA look at the ability—possibility of the Government funding 100 percent of the costs of the debris cleanup here, as a result of those ice storms that hit Arkansas. Today, sir, I've got a letter for you—funding to provide 100 percent funding from the Federal Government for the State of Arkansas.

I've got also a—well, a very positive budget message, too, for the people of Arkansas. First, it starts with setting priorities. I want to spend a little time, and then I promise to let other people talk. But it's important for America to hear that the budget I submitted is one that is a realistic and reasonable budget, one that sets priorities.

One thing that our governments must do is set priorities. Without priorities, there is haphazard spending. The job of a President is to set clear priorities. A priority of mine is public education. It was a priority of mine as the government of the State of Texas. It is a priority of mine as the President. I understand, however, that even though it is a priority, that does not mean Washington, DC, should run public schools. And so I look forward to working with Members of the Congress to pass power out of Washington to provide flexibility so local jurisdictions can help design the strategies necessary to make sure that every child in America gets educated.

Secondly, we are spending more money, and that's important. However, there needs to be a results-oriented approach to the expenditure of money, whether it be Federal money, State money, or local money. The cornerstone for reform, the whole concept of making sure no child gets left behind, rests upon strong accountability systems.

One reason we came to this school is because this is a school that's not afraid to measure. It's a school, by the way, that not only measures but does not view a measurement system as a way to punish somebody. They view a measurement system as a way to diagnose problems early and correct them early, so that no child is left behind.