

in our country. That we can fund programs—and we will—there will be a lot of discussions about what gets funded and what doesn't get funded, and this, that, and the other. But the truth of the matter is, the issue is bigger than budgets. The issue is about whether or not loving people in America want to help somebody in need.

And I think so. And to the extent that you all are helping, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. One of my missions is to encourage mentoring programs all across the country. One of our missions is to make sure that boys and girls whose mother or dad may be in prison finds a mentor, somebody to love them. One of our missions is to teach—is to help teach children right from wrong so that they can enjoy the great fruits of the greatest country on the face of the Earth. And to the extent you're helping, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you all for coming. I look forward to getting to shake hands with the members of the Young Gentlemen's Club, if that's okay with you.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:12 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Paul L. Vance, superintendent, District of Columbia Public Schools; Annie R. Mair, principal, Cleveland Elementary School; NBA Washington Wizards player Jahidi White; Nicole Keller, mother of Isaiah Greene; Elayne Bennett, founder, Best Friends Program; and Robert Howard, founder, Young Gentlemen's Club.

### **Proclamation 7425—National D.A.R.E. Day, 2001**

*April 10, 2001*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Today, we recognize Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.), the largest and most widely known substance abuse prevention and anti-violence curriculum in America. For over 18 years, D.A.R.E. has brought specially trained community police officers into

America's classrooms to teach children how to resist destructive peer pressure and to live productive drug- and violence-free lives. Every day, millions of children across the United States participate in the instruction given in the D.A.R.E. drug prevention curriculum.

Parents, teachers, community leaders, law enforcement officials, and fellow students have an important role to play in keeping our children away from illegal drugs. Research has shown that ongoing reinforcement of drug prevention skills at home and at school play a critical role in decreasing the likelihood of drug use by our youth. This year, D.A.R.E. has pledged to reach out to thousands of parents with a new parent-specific curriculum to help them talk with their kids about drugs.

Today, we recognize D.A.R.E. as a useful partnership between the research community, educators, law enforcement, parents, and students, and we commend D.A.R.E. officers for their dedicated efforts to help educate the children of America about the importance of remaining drug- and violence-free.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 12, 2001, as National D.A.R.E. Day. I call upon our youth, parents, educators, and all people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate activities.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of April, 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**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:59 a.m., April 11, 2001]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 12.

**Remarks on Plans for Release of  
United States Navy Aircraft  
Crewmembers in China**

*April 11, 2001*

Good morning. I'm pleased to be able to tell the American people that plans are underway to bring home our 24 American service men and women from Hainan Island.

This morning the Chinese Government assured our American Ambassador that the crew would leave promptly. We're working on arrangements to pick them up and to bring them home.

This has been a difficult situation for both our countries. I know the American people join me in expressing sorrow for the loss of life of a Chinese pilot. Our prayers are with his wife and his child.

I appreciate the hard work of our Ambassador to China, Joseph Prueher, and his entire Embassy team, who worked tirelessly to solve this situation. The American people, their families, and I are proud of our crew, and we look forward to welcoming them home.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:25 a.m. in the James S. Brady Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ruan Guoqin, widow of Chinese pilot Wang Wei.

**Remarks at Concord Middle School  
in Concord, North Carolina**

*April 11, 2001*

Thank you all very much. Okay. "Dr. O," thank you for your hospitality. It's an honor to be here. I want to thank you all for coming. Before I talk about a subject dear to my heart, which is education, and before I recognize all the distinguished guests, I do want to say that right after my visit here, I am going to meet with the family of Petty Officer Third Class Steven Blocher.

As you know, Steven is one of our 24 service men and women in China. I'm really looking forward to letting Steven's family know that we're in the process of bringing their son home. Steven grew up in Charlotte, and I know this entire Charlotte area and I know

this entire community joins in looking forward to welcoming him home.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to tell the Blochers how much America appreciates their son's patriotism and service to his country and how much we appreciate the service of our men and women in uniform throughout the world.

Situations such as this remind us how much our military personnel and their families sacrifice for our freedom. It also reminds me, it's such an honor to be the Commander in Chief of such wonderful people.

It's also an honor to be here in the great State of North Carolina. I've got a lot of friends here, and I'm grateful. It's also good to get out of Washington, DC, on a regular basis. It kind of reminds us that there is—it helps us stay in touch with reality. It's important to listen to people who are on the frontlines of making their communities a much better place. And there's no better place to listen and to say thanks than our schools all across America, where people are working their heart out to make a difference in the lives of our children. So first, I want to thank all the teachers who are here.

I don't know if you know this—and I'm sorry the First Lady is not with us; she's heading down to Texas for the Easter break; I'm following shortly thereafter, I want you to know. [*Laughter*] One of her missions, besides making sure every child can read, is to remind folks about how important it is and what an important profession teaching is, that teaching is a noble profession, and that for the youngsters who are looking for something to do after college: Become a teacher. Or, for those who have just gotten out of the military: Become a teacher.

We need good teachers in America. We need people to understand what an important job it is. So for those of you who are thinking about something to do when you get out of junior high, then high school, then college, give teaching a shot. It will not only change some child's life; it will change your life for the better, as well.

It's good to see Phil Kirk. Phil, thank you very much. I was honored to be escorted around the school by a man I proudly called "Mr. President," Graham Boone. I appreciate Senator Edwards being here. Senator,