

Thank you all for coming, God bless. It's my honor.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:15 p.m. at Legends Field. In his remarks, he referred to State Representative Tom Feeney; State Senator John M. McKay; country/western singers David and Howard Bellamy; and George Steinbrenner III, principal owner, New York Yankees.

Remarks to Habitat for Humanity Supporters in Tampa

June 5, 2001

Thank you very much. Mel, thank you very much. I'm so honored Mel agreed to become the Cabinet Secretary of HUD. He brings a fresh look and a true spirit of compassion to the job—plus, he's a Floridian. [Laughter] He's going to make a big difference.

It's great to be here with the Lieutenant Governor. Tell Governor Bush, I hope he slept in well. [Laughter] Here the rest of us are out working for a better Florida and a better America. [Laughter]

I'm so honored to be here with members of the congressional delegation: Davis, Miller, Putnam, and Young. Thank you, Congressmen, for being here, and I look forward to flying back to Washington with you today.

Millard, it is an honor to be here with you. I talk about soldiers and the armies of compassion; Millard is the general, and Corporal Bush reported for duty today. [Laughter] I did run into Sergeant Doris Meyer. [Laughter] I can barely lift my arm. [Laughter] What a great, great honor it was to be here with Roger and the leadership of Habitat for this part of the State and all the volunteers, people who work hard, sweat hard, and end up the day with a beautiful smile on your face.

I really wish I could spend more time building. It is one of these moments of life where you realize there is something greater than yourself in life, and that you get the joy of helping somebody help themselves.

Johana, thank you and your family for allowing for this invasion of your privacy. But it is important for America to see the fact that, one, you'll own a home, and two, that you're willing to work for it. And as importantly, there are hundreds of other Americans who are willing to stand side by side

with you so that you can enjoy one of the great benefits of America—owning your own property, having a piece of the future of America—so that your future and the future of your *ninos* is very hopeful. And that's what America is about. This is the land of hope and promise and opportunity. And as importantly, it is a land of compassionate people.

I like to tell people that I wish I knew the law that I could sign that would make people love one another. That's not the Government; that comes from something much greater than people, as you all know. This is a land of faith and compassion. It is a land of thousands and hundreds of people who ask the question when they wake up, what can I do to love my neighbor? That is not a Government function. That doesn't happen because of Government, and you and I know that. And that's why it is so important for our Nation to recognize the promise and power of faith in America. And that's why our Government should not fear working side by side with faith-based organizations. Quite the opposite: We ought to fund faith-based organizations so that they can do their duty and love and compassion.

Oh, there are some in our society who are skeptical about funding faith. I hear it all the time in the Halls of Congress, "We can't fund faith-based organizations." If that's the case, are they willing to eliminate the line item for programs such as Habitat for Humanity in the budget? I say they shouldn't. As a matter of fact, I'm submitting a budget next year that triples the amount of money available for programs such as Habitat for Humanity. Should we eliminate college scholarships where a child can go to a faith-based university? Should we say Medicaid or Medicare recipients can't take their Federal money to a religious hospital?

To the skeptics of faith in our society, I say, come to Habitat Humanity building sites—listen to the opening prayer, so eloquently delivered today by a fellow Methodist—listen to the words that are said, that inspire people to take an extra step to help a neighbor in need.

No, those who worry about faith in our society and Government's willingness to stand side by side with faith, don't understand the power of faith and the promise of

faith and the hope of faith. And if this Nation expects to fulfill its promise, we ought to welcome faith-based and community-based programs all throughout America, encourage them to flourish, ask others to come and join, call upon mentors who are willing to put their arm around a child in need, welcome faith-based programs into our prisons, who understand that when you change a heart, you change a man or a woman's life.

No, this is a fabulous Nation because of our people and the compassion buried in the hearts and souls of the American people. And it's such a huge honor to come to a site of love and a site of compassion and a site of care, to work side by side with fellow Americans on kind of a hot day—[laughter]—with one thing in mind, to help Johana and, therefore, help our society and help America continue to be the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

I'm so honored to be here, thankful for the chance to work. And thank you all so very much for what you do.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. at a building site. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gov. Frank Brogan of Florida; Millard Fuller, founder and president, Habitat for Humanity; Doris Meyer, house leader volunteer, and Roger Giron, chairman of the board, Hillsborough County Habitat for Humanity; and Johana Rodriguez, whose home the President helped build.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With the Senate Education Working Group and an Exchange With Reporters

June 5, 2001

The President. Listen, thank you all for coming. It is good to see Members of the Senate coming back from the Memorial Day break. We're here to discuss the education bill that has been passed by the House of Representatives that will be debated soon, I believe. We hope soon—this afternoon on the floor of the United States Senate. And I, of course, am anxious to talk to the chairman of the Education Committee, Senator Kennedy, about getting the bill done.

There's been a lot of discussion about the bill, a lot of agreements that have been made.

There's been a lot of hard work from a lot of people around this table, and my hope is, is that we don't try to add to or subtract from the bill after our agreements have been made.

I look forward to hearing from the Members about how best to get this bill complete. I think we have an opportunity—I know we have an opportunity to show the American people that although the structure of the Senate may have been altered somewhat, we still can get things done in a way that's positive for America. So, welcome the Members here.

Secondly, I am deeply concerned, as are Members of the Senate around this table, about the situation in the U.S. steel industry. And we're concerned about unfair trade practices that may be affecting the economics of the steel industry and, therefore, call upon the International Trade Commission under Section 201 to have a full investigation of the industry, the imports coming into the United States, and make sure that our industry is not being affected by unfair trade practices.

I'll be glad to answer a few questions, and then we look forward to a discussion.

Bipartisanship

Q. Mr. President, Senator Kennedy is the chairman of this committee because Senator Jeffords is leaving the party, saying that he could no longer—because of the conservative bent of the party, he could no longer work as well with you and other leaders of—

The President. Why do you have to make the guy feel bad in front of the TV cameras?

Q. Because I get paid good money for it, sir. [Laughter] Let's not get into your tax cut proposal now.

What does that say about your ability to oversee a party that's supposedly supposed to have a broad tent and, specifically, your ability to govern as you promised, as a bipartisan leader?

The President. Well, that's what this meeting is all about. And there's going to be an opportunity for us to work on a variety of issues. We did so on the tax relief package. That package got a pretty good Democratic vote out of the Senate and a good Democratic vote out of the House. We'll do so on the education plan.