

House Assembly on Reading at the Library of Congress. We will bring together scholars and educators committed to the cause of teaching every child to read.

As a former teacher, herself, the First Lady is a passionate advocate for reading. She and I and my entire administration believe that teaching every child to read is critical to making sure every child has the opportunity to realize the American Dream.

Reading is, after all, the most basic educational skill, and the most basic obligation of any school is to teach reading. Yet earlier this year, tests showed the almost two-thirds of African-American children in the fourth grade cannot read at a basic level and reading performance overall is basically unimproved over the past 10 years.

The ability to read is what turns a child into a student. When this skill is not taught, a child has not failed the system; the system has failed the child. And that child is often put on a path to frustration and broken confidence.

The methods we use to teach reading are critically important. First, we will have diagnostic tests to identify early reading problems in grades K-through-three. Second, we will correct those problems with intervention to give children the best possible help. Third, we will support reading instruction based on sound research, with a central role for phonics. And we'll make sure that every teacher is well-trained in these proven methods.

All of this can serve an important goal I have set for our country: to ensure that every child is able to read by the end of third grade. Meeting this goal requires not only encouragement to our schools but resources, and my budget provides them. Altogether I have asked Congress to triple the amount of Federal money available for reading programs across America.

We must also bring accountability and high standards to every public school. At the heart of my education reforms is a confident belief that every child can learn if given the chance. When our expectations are high, America's children will rise to meet them.

I have agreed with the Congress that we must increase education spending. But some, for whom the increases this year may not be

enough, are threatening to stall these much needed reforms. That is a tactic of the past in Washington that has neither worked for our country, nor, more sadly, for our children. After many years of debate, the American people are counting on us to deliver on our promise of reform for the public schools.

Both the House and the Senate have passed good bills that hold schools accountable and expect results. The hardest work is behind us. We have a chance now to pass education reform based on good principles. When the Congress sends me that bill I will sign it, and I urge the Congress to send it quickly.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:19 p.m. on September 7 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 7 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

### **Remarks on the National Football League's Opening Day Coin Toss**

*September 9, 2001*

We're here in the Rose Garden to help kick-off the NFL's 82d season. This is a great day for fans. And I want to salute the NFL for its long history, lasting influence, and the quality of its athletes.

I'm glad to be joined by members of Washington's Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Club—all future NFL greats.

And now, to officially begin the NFL's 82d season, the coin toss. This is heads. This is tails. Here we go.

*[At this point, the President tossed the coin.]*

It's tails.

I wish the players of the NFL good health, and have a great season.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:01 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Remarks on Presenting the Bell of  
the U.S.S. *Canberra* to Prime  
Minister John Howard of Australia**

*September 10, 2001*

Well, Mr. Secretary, thank you for those generous comments. It reconfirms once again the reason I picked you. *[Laughter]* I appreciate your service to the Navy, and I appreciate your service to the country.

I'm honored today to join with the Navy to receive a distinguished visitor and to present a symbol of America's esteem. Prime Minister Howard leads a nation that has been our partner in ANZUS for 50 years, and a friend far longer. Mr. Prime Minister and Mrs. Howard, it's a real pleasure to have you with us, and also those of you who made the journey with the Prime Minister. Welcome to America.

My thanks as well to Admirals Clark and Weaver and to all the men and women of the United States military who are with us today. We're sure proud of you.

Those who defend America have always had a special regard for our Australian allies. And I know—I know—they're really proud to show that regard today.

Another reason we chose this site, Mr. Prime Minister, is that we have a gift for you. And it's not that easy to move around. This bell that you are going to receive has traveled for almost 25 years aboard the only American ship ever commissioned in honor of an ally's fallen vessel, the U.S.S. *Canberra*. She no longer sails, but she gave faithful service. And this bell is a reminder of a faithful partner in times of crisis and in times of calm.

U.S.S. *Canberra* received her name at the request of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt at the height of World War II. The President had received word of an exceptional action in battle by the Australian Navy, which were steaming alongside American vessels at Guadalcanal. His Majesty's Australian Ship *Canberra* did not survive the battle, disappearing into the depths where she rests today. It was a great loss of life, and much heroism amongst the Australian sailors and marines on board. As a sign of gratitude to those men and to their country, the U.S.S. *Canberra* was commissioned the very next

year, serving my country and honoring yours, Mr. Prime Minister.

One man who served aboard the original *Canberra* was Lieutenant Mackenzie Gregory, and we're greatly honored to have him with us today. Where is Mr. Gregory? Thank you for being here, sir. We're honored to have you. You must have been a young guy. *[Laughter]*

President Roosevelt knew a trustworthy ally when he saw one. Every President since then has felt and known the same esteem for Australia.

Mr. Prime Minister, it was one of your own predecessors, a wartime leader, who captured the spirit that has always made us natural allies. "We work for the same kind of free world," observed Sir Robert Gordon Menzies. "We govern ourselves in democracy, and we will not tolerate anything less. We cherish liberty and hold it safe, providing hope for the rest of the world."

In the century just passed, Australians served side by side with Americans in every major military commitment. In peaceful times like our own, the alliance between our two nations has helped spare the world from other wars and dangers. Australia is a strong and peaceful presence in East Asia and the Pacific.

Australia is a generous land, mindful of the struggles of poorer nations, always helping when and where it can. Your Government and your good people are an example of democracy, individual liberty, and the virtues of free trade amongst all nations.

On this official visit to our country, I know that you will meet with nothing but good will. And in meetings with Congress and my administration, you will find willing partners who understand Australia's importance as a strategic and economic ally. Though half a world apart, we belong to a very close community of values and aspirations.

From this visit, Mr. Prime Minister, I hope that you will take away renewed optimism about our shared future. And I know that you will take with you a parcel weighing approximately 250 pounds. *[Laughter]* It's a fine bell with a great history. And once you get it home, it will always stand as a sign of the unbounded respect of our Nation for the Australian people.