AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

terror. There will never be peace in parts of the world unless we're willing to rout out terror.

And as I said in my speech yesterday, that this war against terror is a part of making sure the world is not only safer but, eventually and as importantly, better. And as the Secretary said, that there must be a humanitarian aspect to peace in the Middle East, that people must have hope, that the hope doesn't come from killing; the hope comes from an ability to realize what all of us want, which is to raise our children in a peaceful and secure environment, hope they get educated, and people can realize their entrepreneurial dreams.

And that is exactly where our vision is. And that's why we will be engaged not only there but around the world where we fight terror. This is the calling of our time, to fight terror. And this Government will be strong in our battle against terror.

Patsy [Patricia Wilson, Reuters].

Israeli Withdrawal From Palestinian Territories

Q. Mr. President, does it trouble you that Israel hasn't withdrawn without delay, as you requested? And does the demand still stand for a full and immediate withdrawal?

The President. Well, Israel started withdrawing quickly, after our call, from smaller cities on the West Bank. History will show that they responded. And as the Prime Minister said, told me—he gave me a timetable, and he's met the timetable.

In Ramallah, there is an issue with the "Zeevi five" killers. They're housed in the basement where Colin visited with Mr. Arafat, and we will work with the Israelis to figure out a solution to the "Zeevi five." These people are accused of killing a Cabinet official of the Israeli Government. And I can understand why the Prime Minister wants them brought to justice. They should be brought to justice if they killed this man in cold blood.

And so I can—the situation in Ramallah is based upon that particular part of the problem. In terms of the Church of the Nativity, hopefully progress is being made. Once the people are out of the Church of the Nativity, Israel will leave—pull back out of Bethlehem. This is good progress. I'm convinced that the Secretary of State's trip helped achieve this progress.

Listen, thank you all.

Q. Mr. President, can I ask one question on the Middle East?

The President. You had your shot.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:54 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Zeevi, who was killed October 7, 2002. The Secretary of State referred to U.S. Ambassador to Jordan and Amman William J. Burns. The President also referred to the Tenet plan, the Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire and security plan of June 13, 2001, negotiated by Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet; and the Mitchell report, the Report of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee, issued April 30, 2001. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on Reauthorization of Welfare Reform Legislation

April 18, 2002

The President. Thank you very much, Tommy. I want to thank you all for coming, and welcome to the people's house. Today we're here to talk about the inspiring commitment and persistence of Americans who left welfare for better lives. And we're here to talk about the compassion of American companies which hired them. And we're here to talk about the next actions we must take in welfare reform to encourage work and to encourage families.

I want to thank Tommy for his leadership at the Department of Health and Human Services. I knew he was going to be a good one, because I saw what he did as Governor of Wisconsin, and he brought that very same skills of leadership and vision to Washington.

And I want to thank another member of my Cabinet who is here as well, Elaine Chao. Thank you for coming, Elaine. She is the head of the Department of Labor.

I want to thank Rodney Carroll, president and CEO of the Welfare to Work Partnership. I want to thank Rodney for his vision; I want to thank Rodney for his successes. I want to thank the dozens of welfare-to-work

stories, the actual examples of people who made the firm and solemn commitment to work hard to embetter themselves. I want to thank you for your example, and I want to thank you for making America a better place.

I want to thank all the company executives who are here, those who have made the commitment to serve their community by serving a—by helping a neighbor help themselves. My goal is to produce a bipartisan piece of legislation that will continue the good reforms of the 1996 welfare law.

I've invited Members of the Senate and the House here today. The House is working up—working on making—is getting this bill ready. They're marking it up, as we call—say it here in Washington. The Senate sent fine of its three Members, Senators Breaux, Santorum, and Bayh, and I want to thank the three United States Senators for joining us today. Glad you're here. You can clap for them. [*Applause*] Just remember that on the next vote. [*Laughter*]

As Tommy said, welfare reform is one of the great success stories. I used to say it was conservative to change welfare; it was compassionate to help people help themselves. Since the law passed in 1996, welfare caseloads have dropped by more than half. And today, 5.4 million fewer people live in poverty, including 2.8 million fewer children than in 1996. That's success—that's success. No one can deny that that has not been a successful piece of legislation.

But the real success is not found in numbers, not in—found in the number of caseloads cut. That's just a statistic. The real success is found in the number of lives which have been changed, and changed for the better. Real success is shown in the stories of hope and dignity, of hard work and personal achievement.

On stage with me are four success stories, Tiffany Smith and Christine Anthony, Emory Bent and Bernadine Murphy. They are inspiring to me, and they will be inspiring to Americans when they hear their stories, because they are people who know how to persevere against tough odds and dedicated themselves to climbing that hill, to defeating those odds. And I'm so grateful that they're here, and I want to talk about two of the stories.

Emory Bent—he was unemployed, he was homeless, and he was struggling with drugs. The staff at Project Renewal in New York provided Emory with counseling, support groups, food and shelter, job training and education. In other words, somebody decided that Emory needed some help. In Emory's words, "Project Renewal helped me be a man and stand on my own two feet and be responsible for myself." Once he was hired by Home Depot, Emory said, "I felt like I was a member of society." Emory will be completing his college degree this year.

What's not said on this piece of paper and what I've discovered since I met Emory in the Blue Room, here in the White House, is that even though the program helped, he is more than willing to give praise to an Almighty.

Audience members. Hallelujah. Amen.

The President. A faith-based initiative helped as well. You see, when you help people change their hearts, it can help them change their lives. And sometimes we need a power bigger than Government or the private sector to help in our lives. And Emory is a walking testimony of what can happen.

And then there's Bernadine Murphy of Chicago. She lived in a homeless shelter too. In this case, she had three children with her. It was just 3 years ago that she was in a homeless shelter. She also struggled with drug abuse, and her self-esteem was, as she put it, "nonexistent."

Bernadine enrolled in a 13-week training program, spent 11 weeks working part time with a mentor, somebody who put an arm around her. In her words, "The course made me feel like I was working towards something and helped me begin the long process of rebuilding my self-esteem." That's what she said. Thanks to the course, Bernadine moved into her own apartment, not somebody else's but her own, and now works at the law firm of Bellows & Bellows. Standing next to Bernadine when I went through the line was one of the partners at Bellows & Bellows. I said, "Does she make a pretty good hand?" That's Texan for, "Is she a good worker?" [*Laughter*] She said, "Really good—really good."

Those are just two of the four stories here today, obviously emotional stories and true stories. But they're among the millions of stories that have taken place in America. They're a tribute to the personal effort of those who leave welfare and to the organizations who've helped them, as well as the businesses that hired them.

I want to thank the Welfare to Work Partnership, which is a national campaign that has rounded up and encouraged over 20,000 businesses to provide more than 1.1 million jobs to former welfare recipients. You know, up here in Washington, there's a lot of talking that goes on. What we like to find are those who can actually deliver, and this program has worked. It took a lot of talking, I'm sure, to convince the businesses, the 20,000. But the amazing thing, is the results are fantastic.

There is a responsibility in America if you're—if you're running a business. You have a responsibility to your employees; you have a responsibility to tell the truth when it comes to your assets and your liabilities—[*laughter*]—and you have a responsibility to be a good neighbor in your communities, in your cities, in your States, and in our country. You have a responsibility, as far as I'm concerned, and part of that responsibility is to give back. And one way you can give back is to help hire people coming off welfare.

I urge people—I urge businesses to join the Welfare to Work Partnership or any like such partnership, so that they can meet and realize the beauty of the stories that we just heard today. It's part of being a good American citizen to reach out to a neighbor in need.

We're encouraged by the results of the welfare law, but we're not content. There's more work to be done. We want many more stories like those we've heard today. And so we will continue a determined effort to bring opportunity and hope to all Americans, opportunity and hope in parts of our country where opportunity and hope does not exist. And it's important for Americans to understand there are pockets of despair in our country, and we cannot rest so long as there are pockets of despair.

This year the 1996 welfare law must be reauthorized by Congress. That means they've got to pass something like it again. I propose spending a lot of money on welfare, to make sure that we can help people help themselves, spending $17 billion a year from 2003 to 2007, the same level it was last year. But remember, the caseloads are going down, so we can keep the money the same—and the caseloads are going down. It's a generous commitment to helping people help themselves.

But we need to do more than just spend money. Money can help, of course, but money can't put hope in people's hearts. And so I want to talk about four goals that I think are important for the next bill.

First, we've got to strengthen the work requirements for those on welfare. We've got to aim high. We've got to expect the best. Today, States, on average, must require work of only 5 percent of adults getting welfare. That's not a very high standard. I propose that every State be required, within 5 years, to have 70 percent of the welfare recipients working. We promote work because it is the pathway to independence and the pathway to self-respect.

I don't think we would have seen the emotion or heard the stories we heard today if it weren't for a desire to have people work. Work is important. The welfare recipients must spend at least 40 hours a week in work and in preparing for work. And that's important. Because many adults on welfare need new skills, this plan will allow States to combine work with up to 2 days each week of education and job training. In other words, we recognize some can't immediately get into the workplace. I know that. But part of the work requirement has got to be people helping themselves through education and job training.

People need—some people need intensive, short-term help, and I know that as well. And so our proposal offers 3 months in full-time drug rehabilitation or job training. Adolescent mothers can meet their work requirements by attending high school.

But at the heart of all these proposals is that—a simple commitment to return an ethic of work as an important part of the American life.

Secondly, we must encourage to work—we must work to encourage strong marriages

and homes. Strong marriages and stable families are good for children, and stable families should be a central aim of welfare policy. We should not be afraid to promote families in America.

Building and preserving families is not always possible; I know that. I understand that, but it should always be a goal. Under my plan, up to $300 million will be available to States to support good private or public programs that counsel couples on building a healthy marriage. It recognizes that if there's a focus on marriage, that some marriages can be saved.

I also believe it's very important to make sure that we do everything we can to prevent unwanted pregnancies. And one way that works every time is abstinence. It's fail-safe. [*Laughter*] And it makes sense for the Federal Government to aim for an ideal. So in my budget, I've got $135 million for abstinence education programs. And not only will abstinence work when it comes to unwanted pregnancy, it will work to fight sexually transmitted diseases.

Thirdly, we must give States greater flexibility in spending welfare money. Today, confusing and conflicting regulations are keeping people from getting help. The intent is there, but sometimes the regulatory world stands in between those who need help and the ability to get help. And Tommy and I are committed to doing everything we can to eliminate the bureaucratic hoops that people have to dive through.

And so the proposal I've submitted that will be in law will provide waivers to allow States to redesign how the Federal programs operate in their States. Rather than dictate to States how each major welfare and training program should operate, waivers would allow States to be more innovative in providing care to low-income families. Let me put it to you this way. They do things a little differently in Louisiana, where Senator Breaux is from. And they do things differently than Pennsylvania or Indiana. And it makes sense to trust the local folks to help design the programs necessary to meet the local needs, and that's what we're doing.

And finally, even as welfare proceeds, it is incredibly important that we encourage the work of charitable and faith-based groups to help people in need. America's neighborhood healers, the social entrepreneurs of our country, fill needs that no welfare system can possibly fill. And the Government ought to be the ally of the faith-based and charitable programs.

We ought not to worry about faith in our society. We ought to welcome it. We ought to welcome it into our programs. We ought to welcome it in the welfare system. We ought to recognize the healing power of faith in our society. We ought to say to churches and synagogues and mosques, love—if you want to love your neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself, start a program to help the homeless, to feed people.

I support legislation—Rick Santorum is the sponsor in the Senate, along with Joe Lieberman—that encourages charitable giving by allowing non-itemizers to deduct charitable gifts, so that we can get more money in the hands of people who are trying to help people in need. We ought not to allow the Federal Government to discriminate, when it comes to the distribution of Federal money, against faith-based grassroots programs. Faith-based initiatives is an integral part of the next step of welfare reform, and I encourage the Congress—the Senate—to get this bill moving. And if there's any differences with the House, get it reconciled and get it on my desk. And the same on welfare reauthorization.

I want to thank the Senators for being here. I want to thank the House Members for working on it. We need to get this done. It's for the good of the American people.

You know, this is a fabulous country we have. I don't know what the enemy was thinking when they hit us. They must have thought all we were going to do was file a lawsuit or something. [*Laughter*]

But we're not only going to fight evil—we're not only going to fight evil with a focused effort to defeat terrorism, but we're going to fight evil by doing some good in our country. It's the millions of acts of kindness and compassion which take place every single day which really define the America that we all know. It's those business folks, people in the business community, in the private sector, who said, "What can I do to help? How can I help somebody?" And when they

end up helping somebody who's been on welfare, they realize they're more help than the person they're trying to help.

And that's what this is all about. I want to thank you all again. I want to thank those who have had the courage to stand up and seek self-esteem and independence. I want to thank the—those who have been mentors and provided love in the darkest days of people who wondered whether there was any hope in our society. And I want to thank corporate America, those who have sat up and said, "I'm going to be a good citizen. Not only am I going to provide for my shareholders and my employees, I'm going to provide for people who need a helping hand."

It's such an honor to be here today. Again, I want to thank the four good souls who have agreed to stand up here. Thank you for your example. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Public Law 104–193, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

Statement on the Death of Canadian Troops in Afghanistan

April 18, 2002

All Americans are deeply saddened by the deaths yesterday of four brave Canadian military personnel in Afghanistan and by the injuries sustained by eight others. I immediately expressed to Prime Minister Chretien my deepest sorrow and sympathy at this tragic accident. Canada's fallen heroes and their families are in our hearts and prayers.

Canada is a vital member of a mighty coalition against terrorism and hatred. It is shouldering great burdens and making tremendous sacrifices to make the world a safer place for all people. It is doing so in defense of the values that define the Canadian nation and that unite our two peoples.

As I told the Prime Minister, we will work together with Canada in a thorough and timely investigation to determine exactly how yesterday's tragedy in Afghanistan occurred. We will draw every possible lesson from what happened and do everything we can to protect coalition forces engaged in this vitally important mission.

Statement on House of Representative Action on Tax Relief Legislation

April 18, 2002

I commend the House for its bipartisan passage of legislation to make permanent last year's tax relief. Tax relief is right for America, and it has been right for our economy. Taxpayers need to know they can count on continued lower tax rates as they plan and invest for the future. I urge the Senate to act on this measure because failure to do so would penalize every American who pays Federal income taxes.

Statement on Senate Action on Legislation To Strengthen Border Security and Urging Action on Immigration Legislation

April 18, 2002

Improving our Nation's border security is vital to protecting Americans from future terrorist attacks. I commend the Senate for passing legislation that strengthens border security and gives our law enforcement officials additional tools to secure our homeland. I look forward to Congress sending me this important legislation as soon as possible so that I can sign it into law.

I also continue to urge Congress to act to strengthen families and make America more welcoming. Congress should pass a temporary extension under 245(i) so that immigrants eligible to become legal residents will not be forced to leave the country and their families to have their immigration status resolved.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released this statement in Spanish.