

realized their plane was going to be a weapon. They told their loved ones they loved them. They said a prayer. A guy said, "Let's roll." They saved lives. They served something greater than themselves.

No, out of the evil done to America is going to come some incredible good, peace, and a more compassionate, decent, hopeful America for everybody—I mean everybody—who's lucky enough to call themselves citizen of this great country.

We're going to succeed. There's no question in my mind. On my wall there's a painting of a west Texas scene by Tom Lee. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It is the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It's the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that has gone." I see a day that is coming that is fantastic for America, because we are the greatest nation on the face of the Earth.

God bless, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. at the Cox Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Kay Inhofe, wife of Senator James M. Inhofe; Terry Largent, wife of candidate Steve Largent; Tom Cole, candidate for Oklahoma's Fourth Congressional District; Gov. Frank Keating of Oklahoma; Chad Alexander, chairman, Oklahoma Republican Party; and Texas Supreme Court Justice Priscilla Owen, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Remarks at the Parkview Arts and Science Magnet High School in Little Rock, Arkansas

August 29, 2002

Thanks for receiving me. I'm honored to be here at Parkview. I appreciate the Patriots band playing. I'm sorry I missed it. They tell me it's one of the best in the State.

I want to thank my friend Mike Huckabee for introducing me. I appreciate his leadership. As you'll hear here in a second, we've got some interesting initiatives taking place in Arkansas, because of the determination by this State and by this Government to set high expectations for every child.

I want to thank very much Rod Paige for his leadership. You know, when I was trying to determine who to pick as the Secretary

of Education, I wanted somebody who actually had been an educator. They've got a lot of theorists in Washington. I wasn't interested in theory; I was interested in results. And Rod was running the largest school district in our State, the Houston Independent School District. And he did a fine job, and I figured if he could handle the Houston Independent School District, the Department of Education was nothing. [*Laughter*] And so I want to thank Rod for being here. I appreciate his leadership. He understands the role of principal and superintendent.

Speaking about principal, I want to thank Dr. Brown, Linda Brown, for her hospitality and all the folks at this fine school for making this event—or setting up this event, giving us a chance to come. I fully understand the Presidential entourage can be a burden sometimes. But you handled it well. And Linda, thank you very much—appreciate you.

I want to thank Senator Tim Hutchinson for coming; Congressman Vic Snyder and Congressman John Boozman, three members of the Arkansas Federal delegation. I appreciate you all being here today. Thanks for your hospitality. I appreciate so very much Lieutenant Governor Win Rockefeller for joining us here today as well. I want to thank your mayor, Jim Dailey, for being here. Mr. Mayor, thank you for your hospitality. I appreciate so very much Ray Simon, who's the director of the Arkansas Department of Education; Dr. Steve Franks, who's the director of the Arkansas Workforce Education; and Ken James, who's the superintendent of Little Rock schools.

We had the honor—I had the honor of meeting them and talking to them and visiting about how best to implement a strategy that not only encourages every child to learn but a strategy that continues to raise the standards, that raises the bar. I found the visit to be extremely worthwhile, and I hope they did as well.

I'm here to talk about education. Before I do so, I want to remind people we've got a lot of challenges ahead of us here in America. One of the things that's very important as we confront those challenges is to never forget about education. See, the big challenge we have now is to make sure the enemy

doesn't hit us again. That's a big challenge. I want the students to understand here why someone would want to hurt America in the first place. And it's because your country loves freedom; that's why. We love freedom. We love the freedom to worship. See, we value the idea of being able to—people being able to worship freely an almighty God. That's what we value in America. And we're not going to change.

We value the idea of people being free to succeed. See, each life matters in America. Everybody has worth. And yet the enemy, they hate what we love. They don't—they don't respect innocence. Life doesn't mean anything to them. They've hijacked a great religion in order to spread their hate. So long as we love freedom, there's going to be this enemy out there.

And so my biggest job, my most important job as your President, is to secure our homeland, is to do everything we can, everything in our power, to make sure that you're safe and your families are safe. But it's even more than that—to make sure you can grow up in a free society, to make sure that you have the same freedoms that I enjoyed when I was growing up. That's the job at hand.

And let me tell you what we're doing about it. We're working at all levels of government to run down any lead, any hint, any evidence that somebody might be fixing to try to do something to America. There's a lot of really fine people at the Federal and State and local level who are working hard to protect you, working hard to do anything we can to disrupt what might be a plan to hurt America or Americans.

I've asked the Congress recently to help me meet this task by setting up what we call a Department of Homeland Security. So when you hear talk about the Department of Homeland Security, it's really meant to make sure that we coordinate at the Federal level all these agencies involved with some sense of homeland security. See, prior to September the 11th, we never really had a focus for securing our homeland. Now we do.

And the best way to make sure everybody involved with homeland security is focused on this number one priority is to put them under one Department. And it's moving

along okay. Seems to be a few roadblocks in the way—some are more interested in their own political turf than they are in the security of the American people, and they're worried about special interests as opposed to the security of the people. But I'm confident that by working together, that we'll get us a Homeland Security Department that will actually function, that will have flexibility, that will allow us to move people to where they need to be. I mean, we need to enforce our border in this new day. We need to understand who's coming in, what they're bringing, and whether they're leaving when they say they're leaving, for the sake of homeland security. And I need the flexibility to be able to do that. And I want to be able to report to you that we do have the capacity to do everything in our power to protect you. It's my number one priority.

But you all have got to understand the best way to protect the homeland security is to chase these killers, these people down, one by one, and bring them to justice, which is precisely what our Government is going to do. I say "justice" because we don't seek revenge; we seek justice. We seek justice. And you need to know that when we go into a country to enforce a doctrine—see, there was a doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, if you hide a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." But when we went to enforce that doctrine, this great country didn't go in as conquerors. We went in to liberate, and we liberated a country from the clutches of a barbaric regime. It's hard for any American to understand this, but many young girls never went to school because of these people. And now, thanks to America and our friends and allies, they're going to school. We're liberators, not conquerors, here in America. Every life matters, whether it be an American life or the life of an Afghan girl.

And we've got a lot of work ahead of us. See, you all are growing up in an era with a different kind of war. You used to be able to tell the strength and size of the enemy by counting his tanks or his airplanes. These haters are the types that, since they don't value innocent life, are willing to bomb indiscriminately. And they hide in caves and send

youngsters to their suicidal death. That's the nature of the enemy.

But they have picked on a country which is a strong country, a country which, because we love our freedoms, is a country that's patient and tough and resolved to do what it takes to define history in a way that is—that values your life and your freedoms. And that's what this country is going to do.

We've got a big task at hand. I just wanted you to know. I want to give you an update so that when you read the newspapers or watch television about this war, that it's a different kind of war. The war goes on, and it's a war the United States is going to win.

These are big challenges for our country. These are big challenges for this great Nation, but we'll meet the challenges. And we've got another big challenge—is to make sure every child gets educated. That's a huge and significant challenge for our country. And notice I said "every child"; I didn't say just a handful of children here or maybe just those who go to suburban school districts. I said "every child," and I mean every single child in America. And it starts with setting high standards. It starts with believing that every child can learn. It's a mindset that's essential for this country.

See, if you believe that only certain children can learn—in other words, if you have low standards—you're going to get low results. If you set the bar low, that's exactly what you're going to get. You're going to get mediocrity. So the mindset has got to be that every child can learn. It's a mindset you have here in Arkansas, by the way. You do; you believe it. I can feel it. I've been to this—this isn't my first time to go to an Arkansas school. Certainly you've got it at this school. The Patriots believe every child can learn.

That starts with the leadership of the principal. Really fine schools have always had a fine principal. It starts with the understanding of your teachers. And for the teachers who are here, I want to thank you for teaching. It's a noble profession and an important profession.

It also is a mindset necessary for the moms and dads of Arkansas and America. The moms and dads have got to understand that they should expect the best for their children. They ought to set high standards.

There's another part of this philosophy that matches what I just said, and that is, who best to trust when it comes to meeting those standards. See, I've learned something firsthand—I kind of always knew it, but not all the smart people in the world live in Washington—[laughter]—a lot of smart ones right here in Little Rock. As a matter of fact, the people who care more about the children of Little Rock, Arkansas, are the citizens of Little Rock, Arkansas. And therefore, the cornerstone of good education policy ought to be to trust the citizens of Little Rock, Arkansas, to chart the path for excellence for every child. That's called local control of schools.

This new bill I had the honor of signing—and by the way, I reminded some people earlier, I was traveling the country with Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts. We were an odd couple in some people's mind. [Laughter] But nevertheless, we both share the same vision of high standards and trust in the local people. He was a supporter of this bill. And I had the honor of signing it. I pushed it as well.

And a secondary—a third part of the philosophy is this, and this is a very important part of the philosophy. It says, if you believe every child can learn, then you want to know whether every child is learning. See, if you believe every child can learn, then it's important to have an accountability system which tells us whether every child is learning. I've heard it all. I'm sure—some of the students are saying, "All he wants to do is test us all the time. I don't like tests." Well, too bad. [Laughter] We want to know. How do you know whether or not every child is learning unless you measure? You got to measure in order to know. In order to correct problems early, before they're too late, you must measure.

See, accountability will serve as confirmation as to whether or not the curriculum is working. It will serve as confirmation as to whether or not your teacher-training programs are working. It will serve as confirmation as to whether or not children are learning the basics of education.

And so we have—we say, "In return for Federal money, show us. Show us whether or not kids are learning to read and write

and add and subtract. Show us whether or not the minimum is being met,” because every child matters in America; every child matters. And as we named this bill, no child should be left behind. The name of the bill is No Child Left Behind. And I meant no child.

And so, therefore, we’ve got this philosophy in place that the Governor has been working on, and your States have been working on, and there’s—in an accountability system there are consequences. If the State is unable to meet standards, if a school can’t meet State standards after a period of time, something has to happen. In other words, you can’t leave children trapped in schools that won’t teach and won’t change. And so one of the things that’s going to happen is public school choice or after-school tutoring.

In other words, every child matters, and therefore, when a child is trapped in a school that’s not changing, the parents have got to know something is going on. There’s a consequence. It’s not meant to punish anybody. It’s meant to save lives. Every child counts. And so, therefore, what Arkansas is beginning to do as they develop standards and accountability, a scorecard to let us all know who’s succeeding and who needs improvement—you’ve got an after-school tutoring program that’s cranking up. And I want to thank the Governor for that. And I want to thank the commissioner of education for that. It is a way to assure the parents and enforce to the children that somebody cares about them. If you’re deficient, you need help, and this good bill we passed provides that help for the State of Arkansas. And you all are on the forefront of that.

You know, one of the interesting things, one of the initial grants we gave out was for reading. Reading is a civil right. See, reading is the new civil right in the 21st century. It’s important for our citizens to understand that if you can’t read, it’s going to be hard to make it in America. If you cannot read, you’ve got a problem. And if you can’t read in the fourth grade, it’s likely you’re not going to be able to read in the eighth grade. And we’ve got to get it right, folks, early, before it’s too late. Accountability will tell us whether or not the curriculum you’re using makes sense.

And there is a science to reading. It’s not an art. It’s a science. We know what works and what doesn’t work. And so part of this no child left behind—we have what we call the Reading First program, with significant grants to States, to get people up to speed, to get them to the starting line. To make sure the accountability system has got merit, every child has got to be reading early.

And the State of Arkansas has got a reading program based upon sound research and a reading program that has been proven to be effective. And so you’ve got one of the first Reading First grants in this State, by the way. And it’s going to make a huge difference in the lives of your children. And I want to appreciate very much those who are working on making sure that the minimum is met—no child is left behind. But the minimum is not good enough for America. See, we don’t believe in the minimum in this country. We believe in the maximum.

We’ve got to aim higher. We need to challenge every student. I don’t mean just the top 10. I mean every student needs to be challenged. We’ve got to make sure that people understand, starting with the parents, by the way, that they ought to challenge their children to take the toughest classes possible. That’s what we have to do. You get people up to the minimum, but that’s not good enough. We’ve got to provide people to continue to challenge themselves.

I talked to three fine students today, two from this school and one from another school, talking about the need to be challenged. We heard from—we heard that many times parents don’t really understand the significance of challenging—of having their students taking challenging courses, that many students—and maybe you all are some of them here—say, “Well, I don’t want to take a tough course. See, I can’t pass that. Only the really smart people take the tough courses, and I don’t happen to be all that smart. Therefore, I’m not going to take it.” I doubt that’s the case in this school, but there are schools where that’s the case.

Or you hear students saying, “Don’t take the tough courses. It will make you a nerd.” [Laughter] You’re missing out if that’s the way you think. See, you’re missing an opportunity. It’s an opportunity lost. It is not in

your self-interest that you think for such low standards. And I want the parents of this State and across the country to understand that the minimum isn't acceptable for your children. And there's a way to achieve—there's a way to achieve something significant in this State, and I want to talk to you about an interesting program that we actually tried in Texas that worked.

But it's to the citizens' advantage not only that we raise standards and challenge students—you've got colleges where they're teaching remedial reading—not only colleges in Arkansas but around the country. That's not right, see. You don't want your higher education systems to be remedial education systems. If you want the best for your citizens—and I presume everybody in this State does—then we've got to get it right early and make sure that we continue to challenge our students. One reason I came here is because this is a school that challenges the students in two incredibly important subjects, math and science and, of course, the arts as well.

But today I want to talk about what we're creating in Arkansas, called the Center for State Scholars. It's the first of five States that had been chosen. Again, you were chosen because you've got a Governor who cares; you've got people who care; you believe in setting high standards. And here's the way it works. The first thing that happens is that the business community, which is—and the catalyst will be what they call the Business Roundtable, which is a national group of large employers—comes together, and they start becoming involved in the school—Little Rock school district, for example. And they start interviewing children in eighth grade about their ambitions and explaining reality. If you don't have any ambitions, the minimum wage job isn't going to get you to where you want to get, for example. In other words, “What is your ambitions? And oh, by the way, if that is your ambition, here's what it's going to take to achieve it.” It's kind of a reality check.

And again, I'll repeat to you, the meetings don't take place with just A students. Every student—every student is going to be contacted. Every student is going to be involved. And then what happens is, is that they start promoting advance courses. In other words,

it's a practical application of reality to what must take place in the classrooms.

It sounds so simple, but it works, by the way. We've seen it work in Texas. I mean, thousands of students have been challenged to take AP courses. Thousands of students who didn't really realize the value of raising the bar have gone—taken extra credits and have learned new language. I mean, it is an effective way to spread the word to parent and student alike that if you're interested in your future, raise the bar. Take the toughest courses. That, in itself, has a positive effect on the schools.

See, I believe teachers want the very best. I believe they love the thought when students say, “Teach me more. Raise the standards for me, please.” This is going to be a positive thing for the State of Arkansas, I can assure you. The Texas Scholars Curriculum score—Texas Scholars score 102 points higher on the SAT than their counterpart. By the way, this is thousands of students, not just a handful. Those who have completed physics and pre-calculus are now up by 50 percent since the program was started 10 years ago. It works. And it's going to be implemented here in Arkansas.

One of the reasons I've come is not only to herald the need for good education but to talk about this center right here in your State. I call upon your business community to participate. The grants that we're issuing from the Federal Government will help kind of bring people together, help people understand what it takes to make this program successful. It takes business participation. It takes a willing school district. It takes a State that's willing to facilitate. It takes parents who care, and it takes students willing to listen. And it's going to happen here in Arkansas. And as a result of this program, I firmly believe when you implement it, your great State is going to be better off. You'll shine. You'll be a beacon for others to see what is possible.

I want to talk about one other thing, if you don't mind. Here's how I think. Out of the evil done to America is going to come some incredible good. And I want our students to hear that. Out of the evil—and make no mistake, what was done on September the 11th was evil—is going to come some good.

I believe the world will be more peaceful. And you just need to know that that's the game—that's the goal, is peace in this world, not only peace here at home but peace in parts of the world where people have quit on peace, peace in parts of the world where people have said peace is impossible. I think it is. That's the vision I have. And I know by leading in that direction that we can achieve peace. I believe that.

And here at home we can have a more compassionate America. I don't know what went into the minds of the people that attacked us. They probably said, "Well, this country is so self-absorbed and so materialistic and so selfish that nothing would happen. Oh, they may file a lawsuit or two, but other than that, they're so weak, nothing would happen"—is what they probably thought. And they're learning something else about America. See, they're learning the true character of the country.

Not only are we tough when we need to be tough, not only are we patient when we need to be patient, but we're a compassionate country. That's what they're learning. See, people understand that being a patriot is now—now they understand is more than just putting your hand over your heart. See, a patriot is loving a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. If you want to join the war on terror, do some good.

There are pockets of despair and hopelessness and addiction in this good country. There just are. And when one of us hurts, we all hurt. Now, my view of Government is, Government can hand out money—and it can, and it does quite often, I might add—[laughter]—but what it cannot do is put hope in people's hearts or a sense of purpose in people's lives. That happens when a loving soul says, "I love you," to somebody in need. That's when that happens. It happens when somebody puts their arm around a child and says, "What can I do to make your life better? How can I mentor you? How can I help?"

My call to the seniors and juniors and sophomores here is to understand that serving something greater than yourself in life is a part of being an American. And when the enemy hit us, a lot of good folks stepped back and said, "What is life worth? What do we need to do? How can I help? How can

I serve?" Service is a part of being a responsible citizen. Service to somebody in need is part of being a whole person.

Today I had the honor of meeting Connie Melton, who greeted me at Air Force One. She's a graduate of Parkview Arts and Science Magnet School. She is the founder of the Arkansas affiliate for Dress for Success, which provides suits and business attire to low-income women trying to enter the workforce. I met her at the airport. I said, "How are you doing?" She said, "We've helped over 100—100—people already." She's been in business, I think she said, a little over a year. One hundred lives have been changed, she said, through the simple act of providing somebody with some decent clothes to help them out.

You see, our society hurts in many places, but it can change. It can change, one heart, one soul at a time. And while we all realize one of us can't do everything, one of us can do something to be a part of helping change those hearts and souls. Connie Melton, citizen, soldier in the army of compassion, didn't need a Government law to tell her to step forward. She listened to a universal call, something much higher than Government. And she's affecting the community in which she lives in such an incredibly positive and hopeful way. Connie, thank you for coming—appreciate you being here.

The reason I appreciate so very much Connie coming is, I want all of us, older and younger alike, to realize one person can make a difference. And I hope you do. I hope the youngsters here aim high and shoot high. I hope you set high standards for yourself and work hard. I hope you make the right choices in life. But I also hope you understand that here in America, helping somebody in need doesn't take all that much, but by doing so, you can help set the true face of compassion for this great Nation.

It is my honor to come to this wonderful school. I wish you all the best. May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. in the school's auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas; and Linda Brown, principal, Parkview Arts and Science Magnet High School. The Office of the Press Secretary

also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Dinner for Senator Tim Hutchinson in Little Rock

August 29, 2002

The President. Well, thank you all. Thank you all very much. I appreciate your warm welcome. Thank you. Thank you all. Well, thank you very much for coming out tonight. I'm proud to come back to Arkansas. I'm surprised you let a Texan come here this many times. [Laughter] I came here today to talk about educational excellence. I went to Parkview Magnet School to talk about setting high standards and making sure no child gets left behind. And tonight I'm here to urge the good people of this State to send Tim Hutchinson back to the United States Senate.

He's a hard worker. He cares deeply about the people of Arkansas. He's doing a fine job as the United States Senator. I'm proud to call him friend. I appreciate his advice, and I appreciate you all working hard to send him back up to Washington, DC.

I'm so grateful that Randi Hutchinson, his wife, is campaigning with him and standing by his side during this campaign for reelection. I appreciate meeting Randi. And it's an honor to have you here, Randi. Thank you. And speaking about wives, I'm sorry mine is not here.

Audience members. Me too.

The President. Yes, I know you are. [Laughter] You drew the short straw. [Laughter] She's doing great. I'm really proud of Laura. She's down in Crawford. It's where I'm heading after tonight, for a couple more days. She—you know, when I married her, she was a public school librarian. She didn't care for politics and didn't particularly like politicians. [Laughter] Now she's stuck with one. And she's doing a fabulous job as First Lady.

I want to thank John Boozman, who's a member of the United States Congress, for being with us today. John, thank you for coming down for the fundraiser. I had the honor of being with your Governor earlier today. He's off working. You need to send Mike

Huckabee back to the Governor's office here in Arkansas. He's a fine fellow. And so is your Lieutenant Governor, who is with us tonight, Win Rockefeller. Thanks for coming.

I want to thank members—two guys who are running for the United States Congress. Former Member Jay Dickey is with us today. Jay, thank you very much. And the man they call "TR," Tommy Robinson, is with us as well. I appreciate my family friend John Paul Hammerschmidt for being here tonight and for being the national committeeman from the State of Arkansas. Thank you, John Paul. I want to thank your chairman, Marty Ryall, for his leadership here in the State of Arkansas.

And I appreciate all the grassroots activists who are here. I appreciate you for what you have done and what you're going to do. See, over the next couple of months, you need to go to your coffee shops and your churches and your synagogues and your community centers and turn out the vote. You need to tell the people, when you find a good one like Tim Hutchinson, "We need to send him back to office."

And there are some good reasons why, starting with the fact that he has a good vision for education. We passed a good piece of legislation out of Washington for education. It's one that Tim had a lot to do with. He worked hard on that legislation. And let me describe the principles and why it's so important to have this type of person in Washington. It first starts—the bill says, and he and I both believe, that every child can learn. That sounds simple, but too often in our society, we've lowered the standards. We don't believe every child can learn. Therefore, we have low standards. It's what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. If you lower the bar, you're going to get lousy results. So this bill believes that if you set high standards and believe every child can learn, you start with the right frame of mind.

Secondly, it says, we trust the people of Arkansas, the people of this good State, the people of Little Rock and Jonesboro and all the cities, to chart the path for excellence for every child in their community. We believe in local control of schools.

And finally, at the core of the bill is this principle: It says, we want to know whether