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got my gratitude; and I wish he and Michele all the best.

My nominee to succeed Secretary Ridge has the background and the passion that are needed to protect our citizens. As police commissioner on September the 11th, 2001, Bernie Kerik arrived at the World Trade Center minutes after the first plane hit. He was there when the Twin Towers collapsed. He knew the faces of the rescuers who rushed toward danger. He attended the funeral of the officers who didn't come back. Bernie Kerik understands the duties that came to America on September the 11th. The resolve he felt that morning will guide him every day on his job. And every first-responder defending our homeland will have a faithful ally in Bernie Kerik.

As he prepares for new responsibility, Bernie Kerik has the love and support of his family, his wife, Hala; his children, Joseph, Celine, and Angelina and Lisa. He will always be inspired by his father and hero, Donald Kerik, Sr., and his caring stepmother, Clara. Bernard Kerik has devoted his life to protecting his fellow citizens, and his example has led many others to take up that calling. He loves his country. He has gained the trust and admiration of millions. I call on the Senate to promptly confirm his nomination as the Secretary of Homeland Security.

Thank you for serving, Bernie, and congratulations.

Secretary-Designate Kerik. Mr. President, thank you.

The President. Yes, sir.

[*At this point, Secretary-Designate Kerik made brief remarks.*]

The President. Good job. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:54 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rudolph W. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City; and Michele Ridge, wife of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-Designate Kerik.

Remarks on Signing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

December 3, 2004

Thanks for coming. Good morning. I'm proud to be standing up here with friends from both sides of the political aisle who worked together to reauthorize the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. It's a really good piece of legislation. It took a lot of hard work, and it shows what is possible in our Nation's Capital.

I want to thank Mike Castle for being the sponsor of the bill. I appreciate your hard work, Mike. I also appreciate being here with Senator Ted Kennedy, who has been a longtime advocate for the IDEA legislation. I appreciate you bringing your sister. Welcome. I want to thank Senator Mike Enzi from Wyoming and Senator Pat Roberts from Kansas, Senator Sessions from Alabama, Senator Lamar Alexander from Tennessee, and Congressman Ric Keller for being here as well. Thanks for your good work and your stalwart support.

I appreciate Gene Hickok. Dr. Hickok here is the Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. I want to thank Doug Huntt, who is the commissioner of the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, for agreeing to serve on the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education. I want to thank you for your work on that, Dr. Huntt.

I appreciate Kyle Stevenson being up here today. Kyle, thank you for coming. I first got to meet Kyle at the—[*laughter*]—White House tee-ball game. He's a pretty good player. Thanks for coming. Stephanie, I appreciate you being here. It's good to see you again. I want to thank Isabelle June Bailey for being here. Isabelle June, thank you for being here. We're so proud you're here. Thank you for joining us. [*Laughter*] She's up here with her mom, Carolyn, and her dad and two brothers, Alex and Ben, are with us today as well. Thank you all for coming.

America's schools educate over 6 million children with disabilities. In the past, those students were too often just shuffled through the system with little expectation that they could make significant progress or succeed

like their fellow classmates. Children with disabilities deserve high hopes, high expectations, and extra help.

In the bill I sign today, we're raising expectations for the students. We're giving schools and parents the tools they need to meet them. We're applying the reforms of the No Child Left Behind Act to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act so schools are accountable for teaching every single child. All our students deserve excellent teachers, so this law ensures that students with disabilities will have special education teachers with the skills and training to teach special education and their subject area.

Some students with disabilities will need intensive, individualized help. So this law, for the first time, will support tutoring programs to help children in schools that need improvement. When schools are so busy trying to deal with unnecessary and costly lawsuits, they have less time to spend with students. So we're creating opportunities for parents and teachers to resolve problems early. We're making the system less litigious so it can focus on the children and their parents.

The people who care most about the students are, of course, the teachers and especially the parents, who know their needs and know their names. So we're giving more flexibility and control over the students' education to parents and teachers and principals. We'll make sure that parents and schools can change a student's educational program to better meet their needs, without having to attend unnecessary meetings or complete unnecessary paperwork. We trust the local folks to meet high standards for all our kids, and this bill gives them the freedom and flexibility to meet our goals.

All students in America can learn. That's what all of us up here believe. All of us understand we have an obligation to make sure no child is left behind in America. So I'm honored to sign the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, and once again thank the Members for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder, Special Olympics. At the time of publication, H.R. 1350, approved December 3, had not been received by the Office of the Federal Register for assignment of a Public Law number.

Statement on Signing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

December 3, 2004

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 1350, the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004." The Act strengthens the ability of the Federal Government to assist States in the education of children with disabilities.

The executive branch shall construe provisions of the Act that require taking account of race, culture, gender, age, region, socioeconomics, ideology, secularity, and partisan politics, including sections 612, 616, 618, 637, 663, 664, and 681 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as enacted by section 101 of the Act, and section 177(b)(3) of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, as enacted by section 201(a)(2) of the Act, in a manner consistent with the First Amendment and the requirement of the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution to afford equal protection of the laws.

The executive branch shall construe section 615(e)(2)(G) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as enacted by section 101 of the Act, as establishing a duty for a State to follow the specified statutory exclusionary rule only when that duty is a condition of a Federal grant or contract accepted by or under the authority of that State, as is consistent with the principles governing Federal-State relations enunciated by the Supreme Court of the United States in *Printz* v. *United States*.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 3, 2004.

NOTE: At the time of publication, H.R. 1350, approved December 3, had not been received by the Office of the Federal Register for assignment of a Public Law number.