

Remarks on Signing the Executive Order on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans February 22, 1994

Thank you very much, Secretary Peña, Secretary Cisneros, all the people here from the Department of Education, along with Secretary Riley, including Norma Cantu and Gene Garcia, who have been recognized. When I was listening to my longtime friend Dick Riley up here speaking, I was thinking that this group could have forgiven me perhaps for putting someone in my Cabinet who spoke English with such a heavy accent. [*Laughter*] You know, sometimes people from South Carolina are hard for even the rest of us southerners to understand. I remember once when Senator Fritz Hollings from South Carolina was running for President and he was in a roast, and Senator Kennedy from Massachusetts spoke at the roast. And he said that he was glad to be there in honor of the first non-English-speaking American ever to seek the Presidency. He'll probably resign this afternoon—[*laughter*].

We've had a wonderful day today, Dick Riley and I have, the kind of day we always wanted to have, fighting for better education in America. We were the Governors of our respective States together for a long time in the seventies and the eighties. We saw what education could do and what the lack of it could mean. And I want to thank him personally from the bottom of my heart for the extraordinary work that he has done as Secretary of Education.

This morning I started off the day by going jogging with about a dozen students from the Northern Virginia Community College, and it was interesting. Their average age, I'd say, was probably 26. One was a native of Peru; one a native of Iran, just became an American citizen; one a native of Sierra Leone; one a native of Scotland. And as a matter of fact, I think only 7 of the 12 were native-born to the United States.

Then I spoke to the American Council on Education and was on the platform with Juliet Garcia from the University of Texas at Brownsville and others today, and we had a terrific time. I want to thank her and all the rest of you who are here representing various organizations, including the Hispanic Education Coalition. I think I have you all down here: Laudelina

Martinez, the president of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; those here from the National Council of La Raza; the National Puerto Rican Coalition; Aspira; also MALDEF; the Cuban American National Council; the National Association for Bilingual Education; the Association of Hispanic Federal Executives.

I'd also like to acknowledge the members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus who are here, including the chair, Congressman Jose Serrano; Congressman Bill Richardson from New Mexico—and we thank you, sir, for your extraordinary Burmese mission dealing with Aung San Suu Kyi; all America's proud of you for what you've done—Congressman Ed Pastor; Congressman Robert Menendez; Congressman Carlos Romero-Barcelo; Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart; Congresswoman Lucille Roybal; Congressman Robert Underwood; Congressman—is Solomon Ortiz here? I don't think so. I think that is everyone.

Those of you in this room, including many that I have not introduced, have been at the forefront in pressing for educational opportunity for Hispanic-Americans. It must have seemed sometimes a lonely cause. It is, today, an even more urgent cause than ever before. You are here today, in part, for me to say to you, you are not alone.

Our administration has embraced your cause and seeks to support it. We know that doors can be shut. We know that only about half of Hispanic-Americans complete high school; that between 1980 and 1991, Hispanic enrollment at institutions of higher education grew 84 percent but still lagged far behind the national average of enrollments. The percentage of Hispanics going to college is just about half of that from college students in other minority groups.

This is a complex problem. And finding solutions, therefore, can be deferred, as they often are with complex problems, or we can say, because the problems are difficult and complex, we should take even more aggressive action. I am determined that we must do the latter because we have to succeed. After all, in the next century, Hispanics will make up the largest mi-

nority group in our Nation. From this pool, we will draw many of our leaders, our educators, our work force, our future.

To ignore the barriers to educational opportunity only hampers our own future, as well as the future of Hispanic-Americans as individuals. If we fail the youngest and fastest growing segment of our population, we'll all fail. Therefore, we must do everything in our power to allow every American child to reach his or her full potential.

I believe and everyone in this administration believes that every child can learn and can achieve. We have set world-class goals in education, and we want to give our schools and communities the tools to achieve them. That is at the heart of our general initiatives on education, the Goals 2000 program, the school-to-work initiative, the reformation of the college loan program to lower the interest rates and string out the repayments so that all Americans can borrow money and then do work that they're proud to do, knowing that they will never be unduly burdened in paying back their loans. It's at the heart of the national service program. It's at the heart of the reemployment program, what we want to do in replacing the old unemployment system where people drew unemployment and waited for their old jobs to come back, when we know those jobs are not coming back. We now want a reemployment system so that the moment someone is unemployed, that man or woman can begin immediately, while drawing the unemployment, to engage in retraining to plan for a new and better job.

These are the things we want for all Americans. But we know we must do more if we are to achieve those goals for Hispanic-Americans. And therefore, these goals are at the heart of the Executive order that I sign today.

I know that all of you here have heard of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans and the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans; both previously existed. But we also know, from months of working closely with Hispanic groups including many of you here, that this administration needed to do more. Together with Hispanic leaders in education, civil rights, and business, we put our hearts and minds into finding the means to address the problems affecting the education of young Hispanic Americans. This Executive

order is far-reaching. It is a commitment to education for all Americans.

First, the order establishes a commission that will be made up from leaders of the Hispanic American community. Using the national education goals, this commission will track how Hispanics are doing and recommend ways to improve performance. The commission will also look for ways to better involve Government and the private sector in helping Hispanic students to achieve these goals.

The order will also marshal together the resources of the Federal Government by using an interagency working group. This is important because the problems in the education of young Latinos are tied to other areas, to poverty, to unemployment, to crime, to language barriers, to the breakdown of family, to name only a few. We need to address these problems in their entirety because that is the only way to make progress long-lasting. Agencies will set goals, and they will not get lost in a bureaucracy. Each executive department in every agency taking part will appoint a senior official to oversee their part of this program.

We will also move to increase Hispanic American participation in all Federal education programs. And every step of the way, we will continue to consult with the people and the organizations who have long been studying the education of Hispanics, and that includes many of you here today.

This Executive order expands on steps we have already taken for education. We propose an increase of \$700 million for the Title I provision and to increase the access to Title I funds for Hispanic children by removing a major obstacle, the requirement that a child have limited proficiency in English. We propose a 12 percent increase in funding for bilingual education. We proposed, as I said, direct student loans to lower the interest rates and the costs and ease the repayment of student loans. We have proposed a national service program, that has already passed, that this year will provide the opportunity for 20,000 and 3 years from now 100,000 young Americans to earn money against their higher education by performing service in their communities.

But we all know that with these best efforts Government can only provide part of the solution. We can only succeed if all of us take personal responsibility for our families, our communities, our educational institutions, and our

countries. The ties of family have been a great strength in Hispanic America. These ties fortified by opportunity can nurture and keep a child on a straight and strong path going forward and upward through the generations. We have to continue to support that as well.

And now I would like to sign this Executive order and ask Representative Serrano, representing the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, to come up. I see Representative Luis Gutierrez, from Illinois, here also. Did I miss anyone else in the caucus? I think I saw everyone else. You shouldn't hide your light under a bushel back there. [*Laughter*] I'd like to ask Norma Cantu, Juliet Garcia, Laudelina Martinez to join me, along with Raul Yzaguirre of La Raza, Luis

Nunez from the National Puerto Rican Coalition, Mario Mareno from MALDEF, Gilbert Chavez from the Association of Hispanic Federal Employees, and Hilda Crespo from Aspira to come up; and we will sign the Executive order. Please come up.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:31 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Norma Cantu, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, and Eugene Garcia, Director of the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, Department of Education. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report on Alaska's Mineral Resources

February 22, 1994

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith the 1993 Annual Report on Alaska's Mineral Resources, as required by section 1011 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (Public Law 96-487; 16 U.S.C. 3151). This report contains pertinent

public information relating to minerals in Alaska gathered by the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Bureau of Mines, and other Federal agencies.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 22, 1994.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report on Radiation Control for Health and Safety

February 22, 1994

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 540 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360qq) (previously section 360D of the Public Health Service Act), I am submitting the report of the Department of Health and Human Services regarding the administration of the Radiation Control for Health and Safety Act of 1968 during calendar year 1992.

The report recommends the repeal of section 540 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act that requires the completion of this annual report. All the information found in this report is available to the Congress on a more imme-

diate basis through the Center for Devices and Radiological Health technical reports, the Radiological Health Bulletin and other publicly available sources. This annual report serves little useful purpose and diverts Agency resources from more productive activities.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

February 22, 1994.