

with phone calls. That's good. That means people say, "I'm not too proud to learn from them."

You know, the Founding Fathers of this country set up State governments as the laboratories of democracy with the express intent that they would not be too proud to learn from one another. When I was a Governor, whenever we were the first State to do something, I was always proud of that. But I used to tell our people, I'm even more proud when we're the second State to do something because that meant that we weren't too arrogant, hard-headed, and deaf to learn from what somebody else was doing right.

So we want to support what you have done here. And so we have taken on the job of finding out what works and how. And I want you to know that just before I came here today, I signed a directive instructing the Secretary of Education to distribute this new Manual on School Uniforms to every one of the Nation's 16,000 school districts so they will know how to do what you did. The Department of Education worked with the Department of Justice and the Attorney General to develop this. It's a roadmap for the establishment of a policy for school uniforms for schools that want to use the tool. It provides a central source of information about successful programs, yours and those that have followed, that are making a difference all across America.

Let me be clear, this is not a National Government mandate. This is not Washington telling any school or school district what to do. The decision about whether to adopt a uniform policy as a tool in an overall program to promote safety and improve learning is a local decision to be made entirely by parents, teachers, and local school officials. But at least now nobody

will say, "We didn't know about this. We couldn't imagine how to do it, and we're not sure it will work." If they read this, they will know it will work and they'll know about it and they'll understand how to do it.

In the meanwhile, let me leave you with these two thoughts: Please don't grow weary in pursuing this goal. We can never rest until violence against our children is the exception, not the rule; until we are horrified—until we are genuinely surprised when we hear about something bad happening to a child. We can never rest until we have more of our children wearing the colors of school uniforms than the colors of gangs. We cannot rest until that is true.

And please, each and every one of you in your own way, be willing to reach out to your friends and neighbors and anyone with whom you come in contact across this great State and across our beloved country, to tell people the story of how this works. People are desperately looking for ways to restore integrity and meaning and purpose and direction and success to our schools all across America. You have shown that it can be done. Share your knowledge; share your passion; share your conviction. And remember what I said. Whenever we are defeated, we defeat ourselves. If we are divided, we can't win. But when we're together, America never loses.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:03 a.m. in the courtyard at Jackie Robinson Academy. In his remarks, he referred to Melissa Machit, Charles Evans Hughes Middle School student; Carl Cohn, Long Beach School District superintendent; Mayor Beverly O'Neill of Long Beach; and Bob Ellis, Long Beach police chief.

Remarks on the Downing of American Civilian Aircraft by Cuba and an Exchange With Reporters in Shoreline, Washington

February 24, 1996

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, I have just been briefed by the National Security Adviser on the shooting down today in broad daylight of two American civilian airplanes by Cuban military aircraft. We are continuing to investigate the circumstances of the incident, in-

cluding the airplanes' flight plan and the flight route and what, if any, warnings were given.

This afternoon I ordered the following actions: First, I directed the United States Coast Guard units in the area to conduct search and rescue operations. That is now underway in the

waters off Cuba. Second, I have ordered United States military forces in the area to provide support to the search and rescue operations and to ensure that it is fully protected. Third, I have instructed our interest section in Havana to seek an immediate explanation for this incident from the Cuban Government.

I condemn this action in the strongest possible terms. And as events unfold and we know more we will do our best to answer your questions.

I'd like now to ask Mr. McCurry to come up and either now or immediately, I think, when I leave here to do his best to answer whatever other questions you have. Obviously, we will be getting further information throughout the

night, and we'll let you know when we have it.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, the United States does have confirmation on the shoot-down?

Q. Do you know where the planes were when they were shot down?

The President. We know—I can't say that for sure. I think Mike can answer all the questions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:35 p.m. in the automotive training center at Shoreline Community College. The downed aircraft were operated by Brothers to the Rescue, a Florida-based emigre group.

Remarks to the Community in Shoreline February 24, 1996

The President. Thank you very much.

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. You know, we've listened to you, now it's my turn. [Applause] Thank you very much.

I want to thank Monica, not only for that introduction, which she did very well, but for her example, which millions of Americans will need to follow in the next few years. Let's give her another hand; she was great. [Applause]

I thank President Oertli, and I thank Senator Murray, your former faculty member here and a remarkable public servant who is—yes, you can clap for that, it's all right—[applause]—she's here along with Congressman Dicks and Congressman McDermott. Let me say that we've done a lot of good things in the last 3 years, and we've made one or two mistakes under the law of unintended consequences. And one of them was the unintended and unwarranted consequence of the way that timber rider has been carried out. And Patty Murray is going to help us fix it, and I thank her for that. I thank her for that.

I want to thank Mayor Connie King of Shoreline and my friends Mayor Rice of Seattle and King County Executive Gary Locke and Governor Lowry. They all came with me today, and we've had a wonderful experience here. I want to especially thank Bill Gates and Microsoft for this remarkable donation. I hope this word goes

out all across the country and others try to match him, because this is the sort of thing that we need here. This is a shining example of the kind of partnership between businesses and public institutions that we need more of in America.

Let me say to all of you that when I became President I had a very straightforward vision. I wanted this country to go into the 21st century under circumstances in which every single American could live out his or her dreams and everybody who was willing to work for it could have their shot at the American dream. I wanted to go into the 21st century with a country that was coming together, not being driven apart, and a nation that was still the strongest force in the world for peace and freedom.

Now, to do that it is abundantly clear that we have to meet the challenges of this present moment and that we have to meet them together. One of the reasons I am here today is because I believe the community college in the United States is the daily model of how we are all going to have to behave if we hope to open up the opportunities of the information age to all Americans because it works by cooperation. It is completely democratic—small “d”—everybody is able to come and fulfill their own desires by working together, and everybody