

on their asylum applications for many years. Absent this legislative proposal, many of these individuals would be denied protection from deportation under IIRIRA's new cancellation of removal rules. Such a result would unduly harm stable families and communities here in the United States and undermine our strong interests in facilitating the development of peace and democracy in Central America.

This legislative proposal would delay the effect of IIRIRA's new provisions so that immigration cases pending before April 1, 1997, will continue to be considered and decided under the old suspension of deportation rules as they existed prior to that date. IIRIRA's new cancellation of removal rules would generally apply to cases commenced on or after April 1, 1997. This proposal dictates no particular outcome of any case. Every application for suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal must still be considered on a case-by-case basis. The proposal simply restores a fair opportunity to those whose cases have long been in the system or have other demonstrable equities.

In addition to continuing to apply the old standards to old cases, this legislative proposal would exempt such cases from IIRIRA's annual cap of 4,000 cancellations of removal. It would also exempt from the cap cases of battered spouses and children who otherwise receive such cancellation.

The proposal also guarantees that the cancellation of removal proceedings of certain indi-

viduals covered by the 1990 ABC litigation settlement and certain other Central Americans with long-pending asylum claims will be governed by the pre-IIRIRA substantive standard of 7 years continuous physical presence and extreme hardship. It would further exempt those same individuals from IIRIRA's cap. Finally, individuals affected by the legislation whose time has lapsed for reopening their cases following a removal order would be granted 180 days in which to do so.

My Administration is committed to working with the Congress to enact this legislation. If, however, we are unsuccessful in this goal, I am prepared to examine any available administrative options for granting relief to this class of immigrants. These options could include a grant of Deferred Enforced Departure for certain classes of individuals who would qualify for relief from deportation under this legislative proposal. Prompt legislative action on my proposal would ensure a smooth transition to the full implementation of IIRIRA and prevent harsh and avoidable results.

I urge the Congress to give this legislative proposal prompt and favorable consideration.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 24, 1997.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 25.

Remarks to the National Association of Elementary School Principals in Arlington, Virginia July 25, 1997

The President. Thank you very much, Superintendent Paz, President Allen, my longtime friend Sam Sava. Thank you, Secretary Riley. I believe the record will reflect, when your tenure is over, that you have done more for the children of America than any Secretary of Education who ever served, and I thank you.

I want to say, we are joined today by a number of other distinguished education leaders, other superintendents from cities around our country, along with Bob Chase, the president of the NEA; Sandra Feldman, the president of

the AFT; Michael Casserley, the executive director of the Council of Great City Schools; and Anne Bryant, the executive director of the National School Board Association; and my good friend Mayor Beverly O'Neill from Long Beach, California. And a lot of superintendents are here. I thank you for joining the elementary school principals and for your support for better education for our children.

I want to begin by thanking the elementary principals for what they do for America's children. Like every parent, I remember very well

the first time I sent my child off to school, putting her in the hands of a principal I did not know but whom I came to know and like very well. [Laughter] Every year hundreds of thousands of children arrive on your doorstep, entrusted to you by their parents. And every year you prove their trust is well-placed.

When I was the Governor of Arkansas, I had the opportunity to cochair a national task force on school leadership for the education commission of the States. And we found about a decade ago what you have always known, that when it comes to the quality of education in the school, it is the principal who makes all the difference.

As school enrollments reach record levels, up to 54 million by the year 2006, and as we move into the 21st century's knowledge economy where learning for a lifetime will be essential to success, your leadership will be more important than ever. And your ability to inspire people and to make them believe that we can achieve educational excellence will be more important than ever. Beginning with our Nation's elementary schools, we have to demand excellence from every school, every teacher, every student. We have to repair and rebuild our schools. We have to make sure they take advantage of the newest technologies. We have to make sure that they are safe and drug-free. We have to make sure that we are supporting promising reforms like charter schools and other initiatives underway in many of your districts. But I believe the single most important thing we can do to give our children world-class education is to insist on high national standards, so that we make sure that we've done everything we can to see that every single child learns what he or she knows to succeed in the exciting world of the 21st century. For too long we've been unwilling to insist on that as a nation, perhaps for fear that some of our children could not reach those standards, perhaps out of a misguided notion that such standards would lead to too much Federal Government involvement or too much loss of local control.

I believe a lot of Americans have always feared that children from disadvantaged backgrounds and struggling communities just might not be able to hold their own. I believe that too many Americans have thought that with so much diversity and poverty and family difficulties among our young students, American children would simply always lag behind other

countries that had more homogenous, less disruptive cultures, and perhaps longer school years. Still, for more than a decade now, at least since the issuance of "A Nation At Risk" report in 1983 and, indeed, going back some years before, Americans have been working hard, led by their educators and reform-minded public servants, to improve our schools, and it is making a difference.

As Secretary Riley said, last month we learned that our fears were wrong when America's fourth graders finished second only to Korea in science in the international math and science tests. They scored well above the average on the annual math tests. Six years earlier, our fourth graders had scored well below the international average. These tests, of course, are not of all of our fourth graders, but they are of a rather large and representative sample of them. And they tested enough of them to prove that we don't have to settle for second-class expectations or second-class goals for any of our children.

They also show, frankly, that by the time our students reach the eighth grade, the high test scores drop back below the international average. I think we all know that the problems our children face are aggravated in those middle school years, when they move into adolescence, and that in many of our communities the structure and organization of the middle school was more adequate to a previous time when a lot of those problems did not exist.

Nonetheless, the fourth grade test proved, number one, that you're doing a good job and, number two, that our kids can do it. And that is, after all, the most important thing. Therefore, I believe it is imperative now to take action and to begin the movement to high national standards for all of our children. When we don't expect or encourage our children to learn, we indirectly encourage them to fail. When we set high standards and when we insist on them, there's no end to what our kids can do. You see that every day; you know that better than anyone.

In my State of the Union Address I challenged every State and every school to adopt high national standards and by 1999 to actually test all our fourth graders in reading and all our eighth graders in math to make sure the standards are being met, not Federal standards but national ones, standards that every child can meet in every city and State in America and

standards that every child must meet if we want every child to be able to live out his or her dreams. After all, national standards are defensible because reading is reading and math is math in Appalachia and in Alaska and all points in between.

Since I issued that call, education leaders or Governors or both in seven States—California, North Carolina, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Kentucky, and West Virginia—along with our Department of Defense schools all over the world have announced their support for national standards and their desire to participate in the testing program as soon as it becomes available in 1999.

Today I am pleased to make an announcement that would have been literally unthinkable just a couple of years ago. Fifteen of our largest school districts, including schools in six of the seven largest cities in the United States, have committed to meet these standards and to participate in the tests to measure the progress of their students against them.

Now, I don't know how much news this will be tonight on the news or tomorrow in the papers, but every one of us who has been involved in education—if I had told you 5 years ago that the leaders of the school districts in New York; Philadelphia; Atlanta; Broward County, Florida; Cincinnati; Detroit; Chicago; Houston; San Antonio; El Paso; Omaha; Los Angeles; Long Beach; Fresno; and Seattle—that the leaders of these school districts have asked that their students be held to and measured against the same standards in reading and math that we expect our children to meet to have a world-class education, no one would have believed that. Educators know this is an historic, astonishing, wonderful moment in American education. And I thank them for doing that.

This commitment means that 3½ million more children, one out of every 14 public school children in America, will be held to these world-class education standards in the basics. And it means after the test is given, all of them will get better education because we'll all learn from the test results and keep working until we get the results we want in every one of those districts.

I would like to ask the representatives of those 15 school districts who are here to stand up and be recognized, the superintendents, the teachers, the principals. Thank you very much. [Applause]

And let me say, the Secretary of Education and I are about to leave to go out to Las Vegas to meet with the Governors. Now, if this event had gone on in 1979 or 1980 or 1983 or 1984, the Governors would have been the first group out there. And they've been dragging their feet, and don't you believe for a moment that Dick Riley and I aren't going to tell them what we saw at the elementary school principals convention.

When we get these results, they ought to be incorporated into school and school district report cards, so that parents and taxpayers can see how our kids are doing but can also measure their progress. Keep in mind—you all know this, and we have to explain this to the citizens and the parents—these tests are not graded on the curve. If you make the highest grade in the class and it's not high enough, you don't know enough. If you make the lowest grade in the class and you're over the bar, you're at least qualified to do well in the world you will live in. It is very important that we get that message across to our people. We are measuring what is required to succeed in the world our children will live in.

We in the National Government will continue to do our part. The balanced budget agreement we reached with Congress, that was voted for overwhelmingly in both Houses by Members of both parties, takes Head Start the next step toward our goal of a million children. It will fund the Technology Literacy Challenge to help us participate with the private sector in hooking up every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000. It will help to fund America Reads, our program to get a million trained reading tutors available to give extra help to children who need it most, to make sure that all of our 8-year-olds can read independently. I urge Congress to act to implement this program. All told, you should know that if this balanced budget agreement passes, the increase in education funding, Federal support for education, will be the largest since 1965.

I also want to emphasize that we know that one of the challenges especially that a lot of our big-city schools will face is a looming teacher shortage, that we're going to have more students coming in and more teachers retiring. Just last week I offered a new initiative to provide extra scholarship money modeled on the Federal Health Service Corps, where we pay for medical

school costs for doctors who will go out to underserved areas, to pay for the education costs of young people who will agree to teach for 3 years in areas that are especially challenging. And I hope Congress will pass that as well.

Finally, let me mention in regard to the budget that in addition to the support for education from Head Start through high school graduation, this budget takes another huge step toward opening the doors of college education to all Americans. The agreement provided for a tax credit for the first 2 years of college that would be sufficient to virtually guarantee universal access at least to community college for every high school graduate in the United States and for every adult who needs to go back to school. In addition, it provides tax relief for the 3d and 4th years of college and for graduate school. And that's what we're working on now in these budget negotiations. The agreement provided for that. The tax plan that the Republicans released a couple of days ago falls far short of the commitment in the agreement.

Now, let me say again, I believe we should have a tax cut. We can afford it and still balance the budget, because the budget is now going to finish this year over 80 percent below what it was when I took office. We've already done over 80 percent of the work in balancing the budget. But the tax cut has to, first of all, put middle class families who need the relief most at the heart of its objectives. It should help families to pay for all 4 years of college and for graduate education. It should help working people get training throughout a lifetime. It should help middle class parents to raise their children. And equally important, it should keep us within the limits of balancing this budget and keeping it balanced and not having it explode in the out-years.

We have been handicapped severely for years and years and years because we went on a binge of deficit spending in the early eighties that we couldn't break. Now we have done it. You see the results in our economy: When we have fiscal discipline you have lower interest rates; you have more investment; you have a growing economy. And it's required us to show some restraint here over the last few years, but it's also helped to swell the coffers of State and local government, which fund our schools, primarily because we have a healthy economy. So all of this has to be observed.

I have to tell you that even though there are differences which are clearly and publicly stated between the White House and the Republican leaders and, to some extent, also clearly stated between the Democrats in Congress and others, I think we're going to get this agreement. The negotiators are working even as we speak. And I think we all know that this is a remarkable moment in American history, and we have an obligation to balance the budget for the first time since 1969, to keep this economic growth going, and to do it in a way that gives us the biggest investment in education in over 30 years, and I might add also, the biggest investment in expanding health coverage to our children since 1965. And this is important. That will also help you do your jobs better. And I want to emphasize that if we pass college benefit provisions as contemplated by the budget agreement, it will be the biggest increase in access to college, federally supported access to college, since the GI bill passed in 1945. This is a very good agreement.

So this is a day that we celebrate these 15 school districts stepping forward, representing so many of our children, putting the lie to the notion that our children can't meet the high standards because they're from immigrant families or because they're from poor families or because they live in difficult circumstances. We can all make excuses until the cows come home, but in the end, these kids have to get up and live their lives. And we've got to give them a chance to live their lives in the best way possible. And we have done that. We celebrate that. We live in the expectation of a successful conclusion of these budget negotiations.

But the thing I want to close with is that when you go back to your school, I want you to know that I know that you are leading the fight for the future of our children. More than anybody else, you have to have the conviction that every child can learn to high standards. You have to have the conviction that your teachers can do what they have to do. You have to have the convictions that you can establish the alliances with your parents and your communities that you have to establish. You have to believe that if you demand high standards and have high expectations that our kids can meet them. You have to believe that we actually can succeed in giving our children the tools they need to make the most of their own lives and to keep our country the great beacon of hope

and freedom and opportunity in the 21st century.

Pearl Buck once said that if our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all. It follows that if our American way of life supports, ennobles, lifts up our children, it does that for all of us. That is what you do, and I am very grateful.

Thank you, and God bless you.

[At this point, Samuel G. Sava, executive director, National Association of Elementary School Principals, presented the President with a bell.]

The President. Well, I may use this in unconventional ways. Thank you very much, Sam. This means more to me than you know. The young man you mentioned, Michael Morrison, is a wheelchair-bound young man, raised by a single

mother, who became my friend. On that cold November Tuesday in 1992, when it was really cold in New Hampshire, Michael Morrison got up to go to the polls to work for me, and his car was broken down, his family car. His mother couldn't take him. And so he wheeled his wheelchair alongside an icy highway for more than 2 miles to reach the polling place. He is now a college honor student. Don't ever forget what you do makes a difference.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:19 a.m. at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Stanley Paz, superintendent, El Paso Independent School District; and Yvonne Allen, president, National Association of Elementary School Principals.

The President's Radio Address

July 26, 1997

Good morning. I am pleased to be joined here at the White House by the young men of American Legion Boys Nation, an outstanding youth organization that has inspired thousands of young people, including me, to serve our country by serving in our communities.

I want to talk with you today about what we must do to make citizen service a part of every American's life for his or her entire lifetime. As I said at the Presidents' service summit in Philadelphia this past April, the era of big Government may be over, but big challenges remain for America, and they require an era of big citizenship, an era with new partnerships between Government and business and labor, between wealthy, middle class, and poor Americans, between cities, suburbs, and rural areas, and across all racial lines. At the Presidents' service summit, thousands of Americans pledged their commitment to service. As we prepare to go forward into a new century, every one of us must join them so that we can meet our challenges and come together as one America.

For the past 4½ years, my administration has worked to give every American a chance to serve. We want to spark a renewed sense of obligation, a new sense of duty, and a new season of service all across our Nation.

Of everything we've done to meet that challenge, I am proudest of AmeriCorps, our national service organization that has helped more than 70,000 young Americans all over the country to earn money for college while serving in their communities. AmeriCorps members do real work to address critical problems, from cleaning the environment to helping at-risk children learn to read, to working with police to keep our streets safe, to helping our Nation reach record levels of child immunization.

At the service summit one of the goals for young Americans announced by the Presidents and General Powell was that every young American should be challenged and given the chance to do citizen service. To support that goal, I announced at the summit that our administration would provide 50,000 new AmeriCorps scholarships over the next 5 years to organizations that offer young people a chance to serve. I am pleased to say today that 77 organizations have answered that challenge by offering to sponsor 10,000 new AmeriCorps members next year alone. I thank them for their commitment.

The success of AmeriCorps proves that citizen service works. And it's only one of the many things the National Government is doing to work in partnership with citizens, businesses,