

opportunities for the Nation's most disadvantaged students. Although I have a number of concerns with this bill, I am pleased that H.R. 2 reflects a bipartisan consensus on several principles of the education reform plan I sent Congress earlier this year. As I said in my State of the Union Address, the Federal Government has a responsibility not only to invest more in our poorest schools, but to demand more results in return.

In particular, the bill continues the work of standards-based reform, expands public school choice, and recognizes the importance of holding schools accountable for results. I am pleased that a solid bipartisan majority in the House

voted to reject the false promise of vouchers. I am also pleased that the House, by passing the Mink amendment, chose to incorporate gender equity provisions in this legislation.

As the reauthorization process continues, I will work with Congress to improve certain aspects of this bill, including provisions for students with limited English proficiency as well as provisions that target funds to our neediest students, increase the quality of Title I instructors, and ensure that accountability systems are workable. We have more work to do to enact a strong, comprehensive plan to hold schools accountable for results. I urge Congress to continue moving forward.

## Statement on Signing the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999

*October 21, 1999*

I am pleased today to sign into law S. 323, which creates the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park in Colorado as America's 55th national park.

The Black Canyon, carved over eons by the unyielding waters of the Gunnison River, is a true natural treasure. Its nearly vertical walls, rising half a mile high, harbor one of the most spectacular stretches of wild river in America. No other canyon in North America combines

the remarkable depth, narrowness, and sheer-ness of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison.

This bipartisan bill demonstrates once again that preserving our environment for future generations is a cause that transcends party lines. In that spirit, I urge Congress to fully fund my lands legacy initiative this year and to work with me to secure permanent funding to continue these efforts well into the 21st century. Together, we can ensure that other treasures like the Black Canyon are preserved for all time.

## Statement on Signing the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999

*October 21, 1999*

Today I have signed into law S. 323, the "Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999."

This Act represents more than a decade of hard work by the people of the Western Slope of Colorado to bring to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison the recognition it deserves. Bipartisan support from the Colorado delegation and both Houses of Congress led this effort to establish the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National

Park—our 55th National Park—and the adjacent Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area. I would like to commend Representatives Mark Udall, Scott McInnis, and Diana DeGette for their leadership on this legislation in the House of Representatives, and I would particularly like to commend and congratulate Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, who has worked for over a decade on this effort.

In the 1930s, President Herbert Hoover established and President Franklin D. Roosevelt

expanded the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument under the authority provided by the Antiquities Act. S. 323 redesignates the Monument as a National Park and expands its size. These actions add geographical and recreational diversity and protect the rural scenic backdrop of this spectacular gorge. The expansion will also enhance existing park resources and provide greater opportunities for visitor use and enjoyment.

Like other National Parks, the Black Canyon of the Gunnison belongs to all Americans, an heirloom to be passed on from generation to generation. As such, it deserves the highest level of protection to ensure that the outstanding characteristics and qualities that make it worthy for National Park status will never be degraded.

In the words of geologist Wallace Hansen, "[n]o other canyon in North America combines the depth, narrowness, sheerness, and somber countenance of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison." Through this Act, we recognize for all future generations the unique combination of geologic and biologic features that make the canyon such an awe-inspiring place.

The Act represents a continuing commitment to the protection of our Nation's wilderness resources, by expanding the existing Black Canyon of the Gunnison Wilderness by over 4,400 acres and by establishing the 17,700-acre Gunnison Gorge Wilderness that will be managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

The Act also creates the 57,725-acre Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area, which includes the Gunnison Gorge Wilderness. This recognition is deserved for an area that offers a variety of natural and geologic features and unsurpassed recreational opportunities. The Bureau of Land Management will be responsible for managing these lands, and as directed by the Act, will develop a management plan to ensure the long-range protection of the conservation area.

Finally, S. 323 calls for a land study for Curecanti National Recreation Area. This study will seek solutions to protect Curecanti's scenic, natural, and cultural resource values and determine the best management strategies for this popular recreation area.

This Act will protect unique natural resources that will continue to be enjoyed by all Americans for many years. We can be proud of the legacy of park, public land, and wilderness protection that we are leaving for the generations to come.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
October 21, 1999.

NOTE: S. 323, approved October 21, was assigned Public Law No. 106-76.

## Remarks at a Reception for Senator Edward M. Kennedy

October 21, 1999

Thank you. Is this a rowdy crowd or what? [Laughter] You know, I'm not used to showing up and being the straight man. [Laughter] This is a very emotional moment for me. [Laughter] When I was in the 10th grade, Ted Kennedy was in the Senate. [Laughter] And when I retire from two terms as President, Ted Kennedy will be in the Senate. [Laughter] And I resent it. [Laughter]

I don't know what Patrick's doing here. He's supposed to be raising money for House Members. [Laughter] You may have cost us four seats tonight, with all this money going here. [Laughter] Actually, he got an excused absence from

Master Gephardt to come here tonight, and I'm grateful.

Let me say a couple of words seriously. I am genuinely honored to be here. I love Edward Kennedy. And I am something of a student of the history of our country. I just—one of our guests tonight gave me a biography of Chester Arthur, because I don't own one. I've got this great—I've read all about all of our Presidents; I've studied the history of the United States Congress.

I do believe that any fair reading of that history would say that Edward Kennedy was one