

educational excellence. As a matter of fact, it's less likely there will be educational excellence if there's power in Washington, DC, because the schools in Georgia are different in many ways from the issues that face Texas schools. And so we should not try to federalize education, but there are some things we can do by spending money wisely and insisting upon local control of schools and accountability.

After those needs are met, you're the person I want spending your own money. As a matter of fact, it's not the Government's money; it's yours to begin with. And that's kind of what I'm trying to get changed, the whole attitude about the people's money. As a matter of fact, we're not giving you any money back. As a matter of fact, I am trying to advocate that we're not going to take it in the first place, so you get to keep it. You know, we're spending on tax cuts. Well, that's kind of contradictory language, because it's your money. And anyway, it's a mindset that I'm trying to get—trying to impress upon the people.

And the best way to get this done, in my opinion, is to rally the will of the people. I've got great faith in the American people, and that's what this is all about.

And so I'm so honored that you all are giving me a chance. It's an educational experience for me. It's a heartening experience for me, and it's a chance for me to move around the country, to get outside of Washington and sit face to face with real Americans who are working hard for their families, love their kids, love their country.

And so it's an honor to be here, Bill. And thank you all very much, Lydia. Thanks to the moms. I thank you for your courage and your love, and God bless you all.

Participant. Thank you, Mr. President. God bless America.

The President. Thank you. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:17 p.m. in the auditorium of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Egleston. In his remarks, he referred to Bill Woods, chief medical officer, Lydia Gonzalez Ryan, clinical director, and Tommy Winfield, staff member, AFLAC Cancer and Blood Disorders Program, and Jim Tally, president and chief executive officer, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta; and Cynthia DeWild, whose son Joseph was a patient in the program.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Critical Infrastructure Protection

March 1, 2001

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 1053 of the Defense Authorization Act of 2001 (Public Law 106–398), enclosed is a comprehensive report detailing the specific steps taken by the Federal Government to develop critical infrastructure assurance strategies as outlined by Presidential Decision Directive No. 63 (PDD–63).

This report was drafted by the previous Administration and is a summary of their

efforts as of January 15. However, since this requirement conveys to my Administration, I am forwarding the report.

Critical infrastructure protection is an issue of importance to U.S. economic and national security, and it will be a priority in my Administration. We intend to examine the attached report and other relevant

materials in our review of the Federal Government's critical infrastructure protection efforts. The White House,

GEORGE W. BUSH March 1, 2001.

Remarks to the National Conference of State Legislatures
March 2, 2001

Mr. Secretary, thank you for the three introductions. [*Laughter*] When I was looking for people to serve in the Cabinet, one of the places I looked was for fellow Governors, because I strongly believe that there needs to be appropriate balance between the Federal Government and the State governments. And I found a good one in Tommy Thompson. He's going to do a great job, and I'm so honored that you're here.

I appreciate you all having me. I see some familiar faces—Mr. Speaker—I'm glad you all are here. I want to thank Senator Costa and Senator Saland for inviting me. I've got something to say about the budget, and this is a pretty darn good forum to do so.

Before I begin, though, I want to thank the folks from Quebec who are here. And where are you? There you are, sir. Thank you for being here. I'm looking forward to coming to Quebec City in April. I had a good visit with the Prime Minister of Canada the other day, and I'm confident our nations will continue our long friendship together and work together for the good of our two countries and our hemisphere. I understand we've got some folks from South Africa as well. Well, thank you all for coming. Welcome. I'm sure glad you're here. Any Texans here, speaking about foreign countries? [*Laughter*] Darn it. [*Laughter*]

One of the things that I talked about with the Governors, all of whom were here the other day, was a new federalism initiative. And my administration is going to lis-

ten to people at the State and local level to make sure we clearly define the role of Federal Government and State Governments and then have a—by Executive order, put a group together to make sure it actually happens. A lot of times in Washington, as you know, we tend to talk, and sometimes the talk isn't backed up by action. And so we're going to work hard to make sure that the new federalism becomes reality.

And it's important. Take a matter like education. One of my priorities as the Governor of Texas was education; one of my priorities as the President is to make sure every child gets educated. But I can assure you, this administration understands the importance of local control of schools. And we don't believe in the federalization of the public school system, that one size does not fit all when it comes to education.

And of course, ours is an administration that doesn't care whether your Governor or your speaker or your leader of the senate is a Republican or a Democrat; if you believe in local control of schools, you do so in a nonpartisan way. So we look forward to working with the Congress to pass power out of Washington, to make those Federal programs that are prescriptive in nature become supportive of local efforts to meet—so that each local State and district can chart their own path to excellence for children.

One of the reforms that I think that is going to be crucial is to work with States