

Mar. 14 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

Remarks During a Tour of the Youth Entertainment Academy and an  
Exchange With Reporters in Plainfield, New Jersey  
March 14, 2001

*The President.* It talks about armies—there is an army of compassion in America, too. That's what I'm here to highlight, not only the technology but the hearts.

One of the things our Government is going to do is to recognize the way faith-based initiatives—they take place in neighborhoods all around America. And I believe strongly that Congress ought to fund programs that will allow for low-income parents to access after-school programs that can be run by faith-based programs as well as secular programs.

We ought to ask the question, does it work? And if it works, we ought to empower those who are making it work.

One of the problems we face in society is, Government cannot make people love one another. I wish we could. But we darn sure can find those who do love their neighbor and facilitate programs that will change people's lives.

So I'm honored to be here, and I want to thank you for your compassion and your love.

[At this point, the tour continued.]

*The President.* I'm honored, and I can't thank you all enough for providing a little haven of love and haven of hope. And I want to thank you all for your fantastic music. But more importantly, I want to thank you for the example you've set. All of us who are in positions where people look at us must understand we've got to set examples.

And the drummer was telling me not only was he learning how to hone his skills, but he's learning how to send the right signal to people in his church and in his family about making the right choices, lessons he's learned here. And I am so grateful for your love and your compassion.

Our Government must serve as a spawning ground for social entrepreneurs, many of whom have heard the call to help a neighbor in need through their religion. We ought to welcome faith-based programs into our society, not fear them. And I have come to this program to not only herald what you do but to say to others who are wondering whether or not the Government is going to thwart efforts or enable, that we intend to be enablers.

So thank you for letting me come. And Governor, thank you for your time, appreciate your support. And Congressmen and Mayor and Buster—[laughter]—Madam President, thank you all.

[The President took questions from reporters.]

*National Economy*

Q. Mr. President, on the economy, sir, how concerned do you think Americans should be—how concerned are you about the turmoil in the markets and the state of the economy in general? And do you think it's time to start talking the economy up?

*The President.* Well, I'm concerned that a lot of Americans' portfolios have been affected; people that put aside money in the stock market are now seeing their asset base decline. But I've got great faith in our economy. I've got great faith in the entrepreneurial spirit. And I believe the plans we're putting in place by working with the Congress are going to serve as a second wind for economic growth.

*Carbon Dioxide Regulation*

Q. Why did you change your mind on making carbon dioxide—regulating carbon dioxide?

*The President.* We'll enforce our—this administration will enforce the clean air

laws of the country. We will work with our utilities to encourage better efficiency, so as to clean up the air. We've got an energy crisis in America that we have to deal with in a commonsense way. It is important to not only encourage conservation, but we need to increase the supplies of energy, so as to make sure that our consumers and small businesses and large business have got the energy necessary to not only heat their homes but to run their businesses.

Q. What has changed, though, since the campaign, when you said we should regulate it, so now when you say we shouldn't—

*The President.* We're in an energy crisis now. We're going to have to recognize—our country has got to recognize that we need more powerplants, that we—50 percent of our fuel source for our utilities comes from coal. I'm confident, with better efficiencies, we'll keep improving our air quality. But this is an administration that will address our problems in a commonsense way, and we've got an energy crisis.

Q. How do you respond to criticism, sir, that you have gone back on a campaign promise here?

*The President.* Ours is an administration that will deal with the problems of the day. We've got an energy crisis in America. We use a lot of coal, and we need a lot of coal to fuel our plants, to make sure Americans have got the ability to heat and cool their homes.

Q. Are you feeling a lot of pressure from industry on this issue?

*The President.* I was responding to reality. And reality is, the Nation has got a real problem when it comes to energy. We need more sources of energy. We need more powerplants. We need more exploration for natural gas, and we need clean coal technology.

I am concerned that if we don't act in a commonsense way, that our people will not be able to heat and cool their homes. And I'm worried about—a failure of an en-

ergy policy could affect our economy, and we're dealing with it in a commonsense way.

#### *New Jersey Gubernatorial Election*

Q. This is the first time you've been back to New Jersey since the election, and we have a Governor's race coming up. How often are you going to come back, and are you going to campaign for the new acting Governor?

*The President.* Well, everybody knows the new acting Governor is my good friend, and I value his friendship. I will be back in the general election to help him win, if he wants me. [Laughter]

#### *Faith-Based Initiative*

Q. Mr. President, your charitable choice proposals are probably not going to be in the legislation that goes to the Senate. Are you disappointed about that?

*The President.* First of all, the reports about our charitable choice legislation not going full steam ahead is just simply not true. We're moving on a timetable that we're comfortable with. And part of our Faith-Based Initiative was to make sure we take a full inventory of programs that now exist within the Federal Government.

So we'll move our package, and I'm confident it will get passed. So I really appreciate the bipartisan effort that has taken place. Joe Lieberman has said some very positive things, for example, about our program. Americans are—want to see the Government welcome faith-based programs and a compassionate delivery of health.

So we're going to have a good package, and I'll be signing a good bill.

Q. It's not a setback, sir, that they've decided that there's a little too much controversy on that for now?

*The President.* I'm not sure what report you're referring to. But the reports I get is that there is bipartisan support for the Faith-Based Initiative. And I'm pretty confident we're going to get a very good bill.

And I appreciate those Members who are working with us on it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. at Grace Episcopal Church. In his remarks, he referred to Acting Gov. Donald T. DiFrancesco and Secretary of State DeFor-

est B. "Buster" Soaries, Jr., of New Jersey; Mayor Albert T. McWilliams of Plainfield, NJ; and Rev. LaVerne Ball, president, Plainfield Interfaith Neighborhood Council for Housing. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce in East Brunswick,  
New Jersey  
*March 14, 2001*

Well, Governor, thank you very much. I appreciate your kind words, and I appreciate your friendship. I got to know Donny and his wife, and I respect them a lot. And I know the people of New Jersey do, as well.

It's good to see my friend the Speaker. I had him down to the Governor's Mansion in Texas, and I want you to know he didn't spill. [*Laughter*]

I'm honored to be traveling with members of the New Jersey congressional delegation today. We flew down on Air Force One. I am thrilled that Members of the House of Representatives came, Rodney Frelinghuysen and Marge Roukema, Jim Saxton, Chris Smith, Rush Holt, and the newly elected Mike Ferguson. And I want to thank you all very much.

I'm also very pleased that Senator Corzine and Senator Torricelli came, as well. I have been most pleased with the comments that Senator Torricelli has been making. It shows that—I don't want to single anybody out. [*Laughter*] Not one vote is more important than any other vote. But he has shown a lot of common sense, as far as I'm concerned.

I am thankful they're here; it gives me a chance to sing the praises of those in Congress who are joining my administration in changing the tone in Washington. We'll have a lot of debates on important issues. And we're in the middle of one that I want

to talk about today. But we're going to show, Senator Torricelli and me, Senator Corzine and me, Senator Holt and me, that Republicans and—I mean, Congressman Holt and me. [*Laughter*] Don't want to be rushing your career. [*Laughter*] But we can show that Republicans and Democrats can differ, but we can do so in a civil way. We can set a better example for people who look at our Government than the example that had been set in the past, that we can have disagreements.

So I like to tell people I'm beginning to see a culture of respect develop in our Nation's Capital, and also, by the way, a culture of achievement that I hope people will judge us based upon results, not how we say things. And recently, the Congress has shown their willingness to focus on results. The ergonomic regulation reform that took place shows a positive development and our willingness of people to get things done.

We got a good piece of legislation moving out of the Senate in terms of education, which I'll talk about in a little while. I mean, we're showing people around the country that it's possible to have a culture of positive achievement in the Nation's Capital, and for that I'm grateful. And I want to thank the Members of Congress who are willing to work together to get some positive things done on behalf of the people.