

Apr. 17 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

remarks in Spanish, and the translation was provided in the transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Statement on Environmental Protection Agency Action To Combat Lead Poisoning
April 17, 2001

I support Administrator Whitman's decision to implement a rule to significantly expand and disclose the information available to the public about the presence of lead and lead emissions in their communities.

Lead is a persistent and highly toxic substance that can cause a range of environmental and health problems. It has an especially harmful impact on the health of children and infants. And it is found too often in some of America's older, poorer communities. Under this new rule, workers, consumers, and communities will be pro-

vided crucial information about the presence of this toxic substance.

To assist in complying with this rule, I have asked Administrator Whitman to provide technical assistance to affected small businesses to help them prepare their first reports.

This is an important and responsible approach that will protect American families and our environment from unnecessary exposure to lead. My administration will continue to support and promote efforts based on sound science to clean our air, water, and land.

Remarks at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Connecticut
April 18, 2001

Thank you all. Thank you very much for that warm welcome. Governor, it's good to see you again. On the way in, he heard I was going to get an honorary degree in law, and he said, "Does that make you a lawyer?" [*Laughter*] I said, "Nope." But it's such an honor to receive such a degree. I want to thank the chairman, I want to thank Dick Judd, and I want to thank all the folks here at Central for working so hard to make our visit a great visit.

I love your Governor. It seems like the people of Connecticut do, too. And like me, he married well. [*Laughter*] It's an honor to be here with the first lady of the State of Connecticut.

Sorry Laura is not with me today. She's doing a great job as the First Lady. I'm really proud of her. I'm proud of the fact that she's got her priorities straight: her faith and her family, her country, and teachers. She's spending a lot of time not only promoting literacy, but she's going to spend a lot of time encouraging people to become teachers, to saying to folks that are young and old alike, "If you can, get in the classroom. It makes a huge difference."

And so, for the teachers who are here, we thank you from the bottom of our heart for being teachers. And for the young who are trying to figure out what they're going

to do when they get older, think about teaching. It is a noble profession, and it's an important profession.

And to the moms and dads, always remember that good teaching starts at home; that a mother and a dad must be a teacher to their children. And it starts by remembering the most important job you'll have, if you're fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad, is to be a loving mom and a loving dad, to love our children with all our heart and all our soul and all our mind. That's what it's all about.

In order for America to fulfill its promise, all of us must, if we're fortunate enough to be a parent, assume that responsibility and understand how important it is to start teaching our children at home, not only how to read and write and add and subtract but to teach them the meaning of love and hope and compassion. And we can do a better job of that in our homes in America, and we will do so. And when we do so, our classrooms will be easier places for our teachers to teach.

I'm honored to be traveling with members of the congressional delegation here from the State of Connecticut. First, Jim Maloney is here. Jim and I don't share the same party, but we share the same love for America. He serves his country because he loves America; I serve mine because I love America. We have got—figured out we can disagree in an agreeable way. It would be a lot easier if we disagreed less often. *[Laughter]* But nevertheless, I'm honored he's traveling with us today. Thank you, Jim.

Rob Simmons is a Congressman from Connecticut, as well. He's newly elected. They tell me he's strong in his home district, and I know why, because he's doing a fabulous job in Washington. Rob, thank you very much. The old wily veteran, Chris Shays, is with us today. He's solid. I've gotten to know Chris, and I respect him and like him a lot. He's a good, solid citizen.

And of course, the hometown girl is here with us. Nancy Johnson brings a lot of class to Washington, DC. She's so powerful—she said, “Mr. President, you make sure you come to my hometown if you're coming to Connecticut.” I said, “Yes, ma'am.” *[Laughter]*

I want to thank the three Republican Members for supporting the budget I sent to the Congress. I want to tell you something about the budget. It's a budget that sets priorities, priorities to make sure our folks who wear the uniform of the military get paid well. It's a priority that understands we can do better with health care in America. So, we double the Medicare budget; we increase the number of folks who will be served in community health centers; we have money for tax credits for the working uninsured. It's a budget that fulfills promises by making sure that we don't dip into the Social Security Trust in order to meet discretionary spending needs. It's a good budget.

It's a budget, though, that has created some problems in Washington, because it grows discretionary spending by 4 percent. And that creates some tension, because there's a lot of folks up there that would rather spend a lot more money than that. But let me remind you that 4 percent growth in discretionary spending is greater than the rate of inflation. It's more money on an increase than a lot of people's paychecks have gone up by. It's a pretty good chunk of money. It's real dollars.

The tradeoff is, either you have priorities and keep discretionary spending at 4 percent and give people some of their money back, or you increase the size and scope of the Federal Government. And I've made it clear, I stand on the side of the people who pay the bills in America. If we grow the discretionary spending by 8 percent, it means that in 9 years, the discretionary budget of America will double, and that will crowd out private enterprise. It will make it hard to continue to grow our economy.

I believe strongly that what we did in the House is the right thing. And I believe strongly that we're making good progress toward real, meaningful tax relief. The House had a \$1.6 trillion cut. The Senate is a little over \$1.2 trillion. And the summation of the message is: Tax relief is on the way, and it's right for America. It's the right thing for our economy, and it's the right thing to give people their own money back—actually, not take it in the first place—so that you can make the decisions for your families, so you can save and dream and build.

The tax relief plan we submitted to the Congress says this: If you pay taxes, you ought to get relief. It says we ought not try to pick and choose winners. The role of Washington isn't to say, "You get tax relief, and you don't get tax relief." That's not the role of Washington. The role of Washington is to say, "We're going to be fair. Everybody who pays taxes ought to get relief."

We cut the rates at the bottom end, and we cut the rates at the top end. Now, I know I've heard a lot of people talking about, "Well, you can't give tax relief to the people at the top end." I say, why not? If you pay taxes, you ought to get relief. But I also want to remind people of this fact, that there are thousands of small businesses in America who are unincorporated, people who pay—who are sole proprietorships who pay taxes at the personal income level. There's a lot of small businesses who are creating new jobs who pay high taxes. And when you cut the top rate in America, what we're doing is sending this signal: The role of Government is not to create wealth; the role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneur can flourish. And tax relief means more money in the pockets of small-business owners in America. Ours is a tax plan that makes the code more fair.

The marriage penalty is unfair, and we need to do something about it right now. And do you know what else is unfair? The

death tax is unfair. It's unfair to farmers and ranchers and small-business owners, and it's time to get rid of it.

Now, there's a myth in Washington that says you can't have meaningful, real tax relief. But those are the folks that want to increase the size and scope of the Federal Government. And it really is a matter of who you trust. And I'd rather have the American people spending the money than the Federal Government. Once we meet priorities, I trust the people with their own money. I trust the people of central Connecticut to make the right decisions for their families. I want more people to have more money in their pockets so they can save for their children's education or so they can build for their future.

And that's what this debate is all about, as far as I'm concerned. And I'm not yielding. I remember who—because I understand this: The surplus is not the Government's money; the surplus is the people's money.

I mentioned a while ago that one of my priorities in the budget is education. The Department that gets the biggest increase of any Department in our budget is the Department of Education. It's important to spend money on education. I recognize that, and we do. And I'll talk about some of the spending initiatives that we set out. But I also want to remind you, money alone isn't going to solve our problems. And we have some problems.

Just 2 weeks ago, we received scores from the National Assessment of Education Progress; it's called the NAEP. It showed that American fourth-grade students are reading no better on average than fourth graders did 8 years ago. That's not right. The test also showed that in some neighborhoods the scores are going up, and in some neighborhoods the scores are going down, that there's a gap. And if there's a gap in literacy, you can imagine what that's going to mean in later years. And folks, we've got to do something about it

in America. It's time to stop talking, and it's time to start doing something about it.

The Third International Mathematics and Science survey was released recently. It was a survey of eighth-grade students in 37 foreign countries and 13 American States. And there, the news isn't very good, either. Students in high-scoring Michigan finished well behind students in Taiwan, Korea, and Japan. American students overall scored lower than students in Bulgaria. It's time to stop talking about things, and it's time to start doing some things to make sure our students can read and write and add and subtract. And I mean early, before it's too late.

And that's the crux of the reforms I sent to the Congress, and I'd like to discuss those with you real quick. First, here are the principles involved. It means our Nation must set high standards and high expectations, just like Governor Rowland has done in the State of Connecticut. We've got to expect the best for every child. We cannot assume that only certain children can learn. We must have the attitude that every child in America, regardless of where they're raised or how they're born, can learn. Low standards will yield low results. We've got to raise the bar and expect the best in every classroom in America.

Secondly, we must trust local people to chart the path for excellence for the children of America. We must trust the Governors and local school board members and principals in schools. We must empower people at the local level, because one size does not fit all when it comes to the education of the children in America.

And thirdly, we've got to measure. We've got to hold people accountable. We've got to insist that, for example, if you receive Federal money, you measure. I don't believe the Federal Government ought to design a national test; that would undermine the local control of schools. But I do believe that in return for taxpayers' money, that the local folks ought to develop accountability measures that tells us all

whether or not children are learning to read and write and add and subtract. It is so important to have an accountability system become the cornerstone of reform in America.

And we're making progress on this issue, like we're making progress on the budget. The Members will be coming back from their Easter breaks and will be taking up the education reforms. I appreciate, for example, the work of Senator Joe Lieberman. Oh, I know that may surprise some in Connecticut or elsewhere in America to hear me say something nice about a man that tried to prevent me from becoming the President. *[Laughter]* But nevertheless, like me, he's put aside the election, and he's focusing on what's right for America, and he's helping bring forth an education plan that embodies the principles that I just described. And I appreciate his hard work and his support on this measure. And we've agreed on some core principles.

We haven't agreed 100 percent all across the board, but we're making good progress. For example, we've agreed on a major consolidation of Federal education programs that will give States more flexibility and more freedom. In other words, to put it this way, instead of having Federal money with all kinds of strings attached to it, we're having Federal spending, Federal money, but trusting the local folks to spend that money that meets the needs of each respective State.

We're making great progress on what I've called a Reading First initiative. The budget I submitted triples the amount of money to help fight illiteracy in schools. It says that if a State wants to, you can access the Federal money, but you develop a K-through-two diagnostic tool to make sure kindergarten teachers through second grade teachers have got the ability to discern which children need extra help. It means you've got to develop a curriculum that works. By the way, phonics needs to be a part of our curriculum in America.

And as importantly, it provides money for intensive instruction. So when you find a child who may be lagging behind, instead of just shuffling him or her through the system, we say, "What can we do to help you? What can we do to make sure you're up to speed early, before it's too late?" So it's an intensive program that says that each child is important and each child must be assessed. And when we find failure, let's get it addressed early, before it's too late, because we don't want one single child left behind in America.

And we're making good progress on strong accountability systems, which I just described, that says, if you receive Federal money, you measure—three through eight—so we know. Some States post scores on the Internet. I know there's a lot of discussion about parental involvement. There's nothing like getting a mom involved by posting lousy scores on the Internet. There's nothing like saying to somebody, "The school may not be quite what you think it is, and therefore, we're going to let you know what the results are by comparing it from one school to the next." No, results are important.

By the way, what's important about results is it begins to change the whole attitude in the schools. Schools used to say—and still do in some places—they ask the question, "Gosh, how old are you? Well, if you're 8, you're supposed to be here, and if you're 12, we'll put you here, and if you're 16, you belong here." And by having accountability as the cornerstone of reform, we begin to ask the question, "What do you know? What do you know?" It's a fundamental change of questions, isn't it? What do you know, instead of how old you are.

And if you don't know what you're supposed to know, ours is a society that will work hard to make sure you do. For an accountability system to matter, there must be consequences. We just can't accept failure when we find it; something must happen. And we're making great progress to

provide parents more options when we discover failure—when we find the schools won't change their teaching methodologies, for example, when they can't meet standards—options such as charter schools or public school choice or private tutoring programs. And we're finding consensus to make sure that the accountability system has got some teeth to it, that there is a consequence for failure and, oh, by the way, a consequence for success, as well.

Johnny and I have just come from B.W. Tinker School. [Applause] It's good to have the B.W. Tinker PTA here—[laughter]—which, by the way, is an active PTA, I'm told. But the students were seriously underperforming 8 years ago on the mastery test. Step one is, the State at least was measuring, so we knew. You see, you can't make that statement, "The students were vastly underperforming on the mastery test," unless there was such a thing as the mastery test.

Now because of two great principals, both of whom I met—and by the way, it's also—it should be clear to everybody, I hope, in America that a good principal, a great principal will make a huge difference in the education of the children. Paul and Lauren, they use the tests to refocus the curriculum and the teaching methodology of that school. In other words, they use the test for what it's designed to be for, and that is, as a way to correct problems. Tests should not be viewed as a way to punish people; tests need to be viewed as a way to correct problems. And they did so. And they intensified the students' reading programs and writing programs.

We went to a very unusual writing program. It floored Congressman Johnson and me when we saw the task at hand. It was a very sophisticated writing program for a bunch of little ones. But they intensified the effort differently, and they said, "We can do better." They set the bar higher. And now, nearly two-thirds of the Tinker students showed mastery in math. That's up 40 percent since 1993. And more than

three-quarters showed mastery in writing. That's up 36 percent.

In other words, the entrepreneurs, the educational entrepreneurs took hold of the situation. They used the information systems to say, "Something's not right. Now, let's do something about it." And they have. And B.W. Tinker students are better off for it, and I'm glad I went to see that school.

Oh, I know it's hard for some to accept accountability as the cornerstone for reform. You'll hear all kinds of excuses. I heard them as the Governor of Texas; I'm sure Johnny's heard them. You'll hear people say, "Well, that's too much Government. We can't have that kind of Government." My attitude is, the Government ought to be results oriented, not process oriented. The Government ought to ask the people, "What are the results?" And if the results aren't good enough, we better expect a better return for taxpayers' money.

And you'll hear people say, "Well, you can't test, because it's racist to test." Folks, let me tell you this as plainly as I can: It's racist not to test. It is racist not to measure. Because guess who gets shuffled through the system? Children whose parents don't speak English as a first language—it's so much easier to quit on some newly arrived to our country. "It's too hard to educate this person; we'll just move him through. We'll ask them how old they are and put them here, regardless of whether they can read and write." Inner-city kids—it's so much easier to walk into a classroom of inner-city kids and say, "These kids are too hard to educate. We'll move them through." Those days have got to end in America. What we need to do is to make sure not one child gets left behind.

And I aim to do something about math, as well. I've been spending a lot of time talking about reading, but in my budget I want to point up a couple of programs that I think make sense: \$200 million for States to develop math and science partnership programs with local education districts,

as well as higher education institutions—an opportunity to be able to combine the two.

We've got money in our budget for loan forgiveness for math and science graduates who teach in high-needed schools for up to 5 years. And that's to defer loans—from \$5,000 to \$17,500 of loan forgiveness.

And as importantly, we increase teacher training funds, up to \$2.6 billion in the year 2002—up 15 percent from 2001—and provide States the flexibility needed to make sure that the teacher training matches the needs in the classrooms across the State of Connecticut, for example.

Now, this budget is good. Now, they'll be arguing about spending more money or not spending more money. But the budget we submitted, coupled with the reforms that we're asking for, will make a huge difference in making sure that we meet a goal that's not a Republican goal, and it's not a Democratic goal; it's an American goal of making sure every child in America gets educated.

And one other aspect of the education program I want to share with you is, also, we triple the amount of money for character education in our classrooms. Education is not complete unless we're willing to teach our children not only how to read and write but the difference between right and wrong. We ought not to fear to teach our children good, old-fashioned values that have stood the test of time: Don't lie, cheat, or steal; respect others; respect their opinions.

We also have got a program that says, in the after-school programs—we spend all kinds of money for after-school programs—but I think it's so important for us to open up those after-school programs to faith-based and community-based programs that will be able to say—that sends a clear message, that if you exist because of the universal call to love a neighbor just like you would like to be loved yourself, you're welcome onto the public school grounds in an after-school program to teach children

right from wrong, to teach them that somebody in our society cares for them.

Which really leads me to a bigger point and a bigger mission for all of us, and that is, how to usher in a period of responsibility in America. I think I can help with that, and I think all of us in Washington can help with that by, first of all, working together to change the tone in our Nation's Capital. It means that we've got to have a spirit of respect in Washington. We've got to end this kind of needless name-calling and finger-pointing, the kind of zero-sum politics that says, "If so-and-so thinks it's a good idea, I think it's a lousy idea, because we happen to be from different political parties."

I think we need to respect each other more in Washington, which will in turn set a good signal for people on the playgrounds of America, for example, to respect somebody with whom they may not agree. We need a culture of results in Washington, DC—less noise, less preening in front of cameras, and more focus on getting things done on behalf of the American people. And we need a spirit of responsibility. And it starts with leadership, as well, that each of us understand the awesome responsibilities of the jobs we hold.

I think we're making progress in the Nation's Capital. I truly do. Oh, I know there's occasionally somebody says something, particularly about a nice fellow like me, that I don't like—[laughter]—but I tend to ignore it and focus on the people's business. And the people's business is what's important.

And that's why I love to travel outside of Washington. I love to drive the roads of our country, just like I did today, and see the hundreds of people who came to wave at the Presidential limousine. It's important for a President to see that and for Members of Congress to be aware of that, as well, because it reminds us about the strength of America. And the strength of this country lies not inside the halls of our government in Washington, DC, or in

Hartford, Connecticut. The true strength of America lies in the hearts and souls of the American citizens.

And that's why I'm so optimistic about this country's future, because if that's the case, if the true strength of America is in the hearts and souls of our citizens, we've got a bright future ahead of us, because we've got great citizens in this country.

This is a fabulous country. In Washington, we've got to always understand that. That's why tax relief is important, because it empowers people to make decisions in their lives. That's why the Faith-Based Initiative I've talked about is important, because it says that in order to change lives, we need to change hearts, and there are thousands of people who are willing to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

No, the great strength is when we understand America's society changes one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time. And that's oftentimes because some loving American, not because of Government but because of care and compassion, says to a neighbor in need, "What can I do to help?" I hope to see mentoring programs flourish all across America. I want any child who wonders whether somebody loves them to have a loving adult say, "I love you. I love you with all the bottom of my heart."

No, this country is based upon great values and great principles. But its true greatness is the fact that we're a land full of decent, loving, and compassionate and hard-working people. And I can't tell you what a huge honor it is to be a President of such a land.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. in the Welte Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. John G. Rowland of Connecticut and his wife, Patricia; Lawrence D. McHugh, chairman, board of trustees, Connecticut State University System; Richard L. Judd, president, Central Connecticut State

University; and Paul V. Ciochetti, former principal, and Lauren F. Elias, principal, B.W. Tinker Elementary School.

Remarks at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
April 18, 2001

Thank you very much. [*Applause*] This is a hallowed place. Please behave yourself.

It's an honor for us to be here. Laura and I have just come from a fantastic tour. I want to thank Rabbi Greenberg for his hospitality and Ruth Mandel for her hospitality and the Director, Sara Bloomfield, for giving us such a special evening. Thank you all very much for your graciousness, and I want to thank you all very much for coming. And it's an honor for me to be here with members of my White House staff, friends of mine from all around the country.

This isn't like any other museum. It bears witness to the best and to the worst of the human heart. The images here stay with you, and only by confronting them can we begin to grasp the full enormity of the Holocaust. I urge Americans planning a visit to Washington to come here themselves and see what we have just seen.

History records many atrocities before and after the 1930s and 1940s. But it was the Holocaust that forced us to find a new term for horrors on such a scale—a crime against humanity. Human evil has never been so ambitious in scope, so systematic in execution, and so deliberate in its destruction.

In places like this, the evidence has been kept. Without it, we might forget the past, and we might neglect the future. And we must never forget. We must always remem-

ber both the cruelty of the guilty and the courage and innocence of their victims.

So many stories from the concentration camps will never be told because many of the witnesses did not survive. The stories we have must be preserved forever: Stories of mothers sacrificing themselves to save their children; stories of children trying to shield their parents; stories of men and women praying and comforting one another in the last moments on this Earth. These tell the greater truth of the Holocaust: The evil is real, but hope endures. Above all, this museum is a testament to hope.

Tomorrow I will have the honor of joining in the Days of Remembrance observances at the Capitol. I will convey America's commitment to the memory of 6 million who died in the Holocaust, our commitment to averting future tragedies, and our commitment to a friend, as a friend, to the Jewish people—to their cause and to the nation they built. I hope to see many of you at the Capitol tomorrow.

Thank you all for coming, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:50 p.m. in the Hall of Witness. In his remarks, he referred to Rabbi Irving Greenberg, chair, and Ruth B. Mandel, vice chair, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council; and Sara J. Bloomfield, Director, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.