

Harry and Bess Truman did when he played at their inaugural ball in 1949. The Johnsons, the Nixons, and the Reagans all invited Lionel here, as well. Presidents come and go, but there's only one "Vibes President" of the United States. [Laughter]

Lionel Hampton is an old friend of our family's, going all the way back to my dad's boyhood. On a couple of occasions, he and my grandfather did a few numbers together. My grandfather was quite a singer, as Lionel would tell you. And as Laura would tell you, the gene pool didn't spread this far. [Laughter]

A lot of other greats have passed through the White House, including America's Ambassador of Good Will, Louis Armstrong. In this room, Pearl Bailey was introduced to Mikhail Gorbachev by Ronald Reagan, who said simply, "This is our Pearl." [Laughter] Eubie Blake played ragtime piano on the South Lawn. And these chandeliers, I can assure you, trembled when Ella Fitzgerald sang here. It was here that Duke Ellington received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which was a fitting tribute to the son of a White House butler.

Today we pay homage to an American tradition, a tradition that only America could have produced. Spirituals, jazz, R&B, hip-hop are performed, heard, and loved in every part of the world—every part of the world. But they belong to our country in a unique way. And as the President of this country, I'm proud to herald that uniqueness today.

If you trace the roots of Black American music, you arrive at the same place—with

a people held in bondage, denied schooling, and kept away from opportunity. Yet, out of all that suffering came the early spirituals, some of the sweetest praise ever lifted up to heaven. In those songs, humanity will always hear the voice of hope in the face of injustice.

Since those early days, the music of Black Americans has told many other stories, in many other styles: Scott Joplin to Jelly Roll Morton, from Marian Anderson to Aretha Franklin, from Nat King Cole to the Neville Brothers, from Dizzy Gillespie to Sam Cooke, Kathleen Battle to Gladys Knight, from James Brown to the Four Tops. It is music that is always easy to enjoy, yet impossible to imitate.

A story is told about Louis Armstrong—someone came up to the legendary giant one day and asked him to define jazz. They wanted to understand it, so they came to the master himself, and he replied, "Man, if you've got to ask, you'll never know." [Laughter]

Well, there's some things I know today. I know America is a richer place for the musicians and the music that we honor today. Again, I welcome you to the White House. And it's now my honor to sign the Executive proclamation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:20 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff, founders, Philadelphia International Records. The proclamation of June 29 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Senate Action on Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation June 29, 2001

I am pleased that the Patients' Bill of Rights adopted in the Senate today more closely reflects my principles than did the original McCain-Kennedy-Edwards bill. I

appreciate the good faith efforts of those who worked to improve the bill by narrowing some loopholes and giving greater deference to state patient protections.

June 29 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

The Senate failed, however, to address the danger that excessive, unlimited litigation in State courts would drive up premium costs and cause many American families to lose their health insurance. I could not in good conscience sign this bill because it puts the interests of trial lawyers before the interest of patients.

I will continue to work with the House to pass a strong Patients' Bill of Rights, like Fletcher-Peterson-Johnson, that provides patients with strong protections, holds HMOs accountable, but discourages runaway litigation costs. I urge the House to pass a meaningful and effective Patients' Bill of Rights that meets my principles.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Extending Generalized System of Preferences Benefits to the Republic of Georgia

June 29, 2001

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to section 502(f) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "Act"), I am writing to notify you of my intent to add the Republic of Georgia to the list of beneficiary developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). The GSP program offers duty-free access to the U.S. market for a wide range of products from beneficiary developing countries.

I have considered the criteria set forth in sections 501 and 502 of the Act and

have determined that it is appropriate to extend GSP benefits to Georgia.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. The related proclamation of June 29 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting an Account of Federal Expenditures for Climate Change Programs and Activities

June 29, 2001

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with section 566(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2001 (Public Law 106-429), I transmit herewith an account of Federal expenditures for climate change programs and activities. This report includes both domestic and international programs and activities related to

climate change, and contains data on both spending and performance goals.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.