

to own a home, to use a computer to explore the Internet, or to vote.

Earlier this year, I proposed the New Freedom Initiative. It is the next step in securing the promise of the ADA. The New Freedom Initiative will help ensure that Americans with disabilities can access the best technologies of today and even better technologies in the future. We will expand educational opportunities and accessible transportation and take steps to fully integrate people with disabilities into the workforce. We will expand housing opportunities and improve access to churches, mosques, synagogues, and civic organizations. And we will fully enforce the ADA while working in partnership with businesses, States, and

local governments to promote the highest possible degree of voluntary cooperation.

The Americans with Disabilities Act was an unprecedented step forward in promoting freedom, independence, and dignity for millions of our people. On this, the 11th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, I remain committed to tearing down the remaining barriers to equality that face Americans with disabilities today.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 26, 2001.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Plan Colombia *July 26, 2001*

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 3204(e) of Public Law 106-246, I hereby transmit a report detailing the progress of spending by the executive branch during the first two quar-

ters of Fiscal Year 2001 in support of Plan Colombia.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 26, 2001.

Remarks to the National Future Farmers of America Organization *July 27, 2001*

Well, thank you all for coming. I look forward to discussing an incredibly important topic, and that's agriculture and what it means to America. It's important for folks up here in Washington to listen to Senators like Chuck Grassley and Blanche Lincoln, people who come from the farm areas—Phil Crane—who understand that agriculture is an incredibly important part of our economic future. But agriculture also is an important part of American life, be-

cause it represents the great values of America.

So I want to thank you all for coming. My fellow Texan, I appreciate that fine introduction. [Laughter] Trent's from Throckmorton. It's a rural part of our State. But rural Texas is incredibly a part of the State of Texas, but rural America is an incredibly important part of America, as well, and we must never forget that.

I want to thank Jennifer Edwards, as well, for being here. I want to thank all

the officers for coming. I want to thank again the Members of Congress for being here to discuss with all of us how we make sure American agriculture thrives as we head into the 21st century. I mean, after all, we're talking about national security. It's important for our Nation to be able to grow foodstuffs to feed our people. Can you imagine a country that was unable to grow enough food to feed the people? It would be a nation that would be subject to international pressure. It would be a nation at risk. And so when we're talking about American agriculture, we're really talking about a national security issue.

Well, one way we can help is something we've already done, and that is to eliminate the death tax, so that farms and ranches can be passed from one generation to the next, so that people don't have to liquidate their prized possession, their most singular important asset, in order for a young son or daughter to become a farmer or a rancher. And we did just that, thanks to the Members of the United States Senate here and thanks to the Member of the Congress who are here. It was a tough vote for some, but it was the right vote for American agriculture, to get rid of the death tax.

And given the economic news of the day, the tax cut was—looks more and more wise. I mean, after all, there's a new report out that shows that over the last four quarters, economic growth has been slow. It hasn't been up to standard. The economy is puttering along. It's not nearly as strong as it should be. And what the tax cut does—by sending money back to the American working people, it provides an incredibly important boost to economic vitality and economic growth.

Now, there's a lot of talk about the amount of money available to spend here in Washington. Make no mistake about it: The appropriators are looking for money. And it may not be as much as they want to spend, because the economy has slowed down. And this tax cut is incredibly impor-

tant for revitalizing the economy of America, and it was the right thing to do.

A second thing we can do to make sure folks in the agricultural sector have got a bright future is to work to enhance trade, trade all around the world. I want America's farmers and ranchers feeding those who are hungry, those who need foodstuffs. We're the best in the world at growing product. Our farmers and ranchers are not only some of the hardest working people in the world, but we're better at it than everybody else is, too. And therefore, we ought to work hard to open up all avenues, all markets, so we can feed people.

And that includes—necessary to do that, we've got to make sure the President has what's called trade promotion authority. That gives me the ability to negotiate trade agreements on behalf of the American people, submit it to the Senate to be ratified, up or down.

I don't have that authority. It lapsed, unfortunately. I'm one of the few Presidents never to have had that authority. I'm asking Congress to give it to me for the good of the American people, for the good of the agricultural sector, so that I can use my efforts to knock down the trade barriers, the protectionist tendencies around the world that prevent our products from getting into markets.

I'm pleased to report, for example, that we are making some progress. There was a big debate—I'm sure you heard about it—as to whether or not China ought to be allowed into what's called the World Trade Organization. I argued vociferously that they should be, because I believe a country that trades with the rest of the world is a country more likely to embrace freedom.

I also know that by opening up Chinese markets to American foodstuffs, it will be beneficial to American farmers. And my Trade Representative, our Nation's Trade Representative, Robert Zoellick, has made great progress in negotiations with China,

opening up their markets to U.S. foodstuffs, to our products.

I used to say, during the debate, to try to make it clear to people where I was coming from—maybe it's the west Texan in me—I said, "We want to be feeding the Chinese. We want our American farmers to be growing the products that the Chinese use to eat." And that's what, to me, trade means.

And so, we need to work with Congress to get a trade promotion authority bill out pretty darn quickly. And my pledge to the people of America, particularly in the agricultural sector is, American agriculture will not be viewed as a secondary issue for me.

There's a lot of folks out there who are somewhat skeptical when a U.S. President talks about trade and agriculture. You know why? Because agriculture has always been a secondary issue. They'll negotiate all the other important subjects, but when it comes to agriculture, say, "We'll just leave it the way it is. We won't work to knock down the barriers that prevent U.S. products from going into other markets." Those days are over with. Agriculture will be the cornerstone of our international trade negotiations. We'll use what's called single undertaking negotiation to keep agriculture at the forefront of our negotiating policy, and the reason is simple: We're good at it, and we ought to work hard to promote products that we're good at growing or good at raising.

Another important part of making sure that your future is bright is that the education systems all around America work. One of the things I took great pride in, in the State of Texas, is an education reform package for all of the people that go to school in Texas that said, "We expect results." I will tell you this: If you're in the agricultural sector, you're judged by results. You're judged by the size of the crop you grow. You're judged whether or not you can plow the straight line. You're judged by whether you're not any good.

It's a results-oriented world, and that's what education ought to be, as well.

And there's a fundamental reason why: Because we don't want anybody left behind, is why. And if you don't measure, how do you know whether somebody is being left behind? If you don't hold people accountable for results, how do you know whether or not some children cannot read or write and add and subtract? And I darn sure want to know.

Laura, my wife, the First Lady, is having a seminar, series of seminars about how to introduce the sound science of education into curriculum all around the country. It says, "Look, let's have some common sense about our education curriculum. Let's make sure it works before we insist that we use it." And that's what we need to do in education. We need to have strong accountability.

Again, I want to thank the Members of the Senate and the House who are here, who support an education package that's going to reform schools all around the country. But make no mistake about it: I haven't forgotten where I came from. Inherent in the education reform package is a strong belief in local control of schools. I don't think the schools ought to be run out of Washington. You know why? Because we're different. School districts in Texas were different. And they're a heck of a lot different, I can assure you, from, you know, places like Vermont and New Hampshire. I mean, it's just a different world, and therefore we've got to have strong local control of schools, coupled with strong accountability, to make sure our education systems work for everybody, urban and rural alike.

And finally, before I come out and shake a few hands, if you would like to, I do want to remind you all that one of the things that makes this country so unique is our values system, the values of hard work, family, faith, values that sound pretty much like the heartland of America to me.

We're winding down the legislative session here, and I hope, a week from tomorrow, the Congress takes off and gives all of us a break. [Laughter] And I'm heading back to the heartland. I'm going back to Crawford, Texas, where Laura and I have got some property. A fellow runs some cows on our country. I love to go walking out there, seeing the cows. Occasionally, they talk to me—[laughter]—being the good listener that I am. [Laughter] But it's important for all of us in Washington to stay in touch with the values of the heartland, because they're values that really are unique. It basically says that values—a value system of basic, inherent values that override politics and different demographics and different religions—it's what makes America so unique and great.

I've just come back from overseas. I'm so proud to represent this great Nation overseas, because we're a nation that can bring people from all walks of life together, a nation that says, "You're free to worship any religion you want," and yet we're bound by common values. You should never be afraid of embracing the values you find in the heartland of America, the values you bring to Washington, DC; you should never walk away from those. They're important. It's important to keep them as priorities in your life, because the strength of our Nation exists in the value system that we oftentimes find on America's farms and ranches, the value that—of worship and faith, the value of the importance of family, the values of hard work, the values of taking a risk, the values of understanding that if you own a farm or a ranch, every day is Earth Day. Every day is an important day if you're stewards of the land. Those are incredibly important values that you all embrace in your organization.

And finally, let me tell you, America is a country that needs your help. It needs

your help by you all living good—setting good examples for others. It needs your help. All of us can be leaders in individual ways by making right choices, for starters, by being responsible for the decisions you make in life.

But there's something else you can do, too. Our society—there are some people in our society who hurt. And we can change America one soul at a time. If you find somebody in need, help them out. If you've got a neighbor who needs some compassion, take time to help your neighbor understand somebody loves him. If you've got a friend who maybe is lonely and hopeless, put your arm around him or her; become a mentor; become a pal. They may not be the coolest kid in class, but reach out to somebody in need, and you'll be amazed at what happens.

My job is to rally what I call the armies of compassion, the people all across America who say, "How can I love somebody just like I'd like to be loved myself?" And the great strengths of the country lay in the fact there are millions of people who are helping somebody in need. They don't need a Government law; they don't need somebody doing this, that, or the other. What they need is to follow their hearts, and that's what I ask you to do.

I'm honored to be able to receive you here in the Nation's Capital. It's a huge honor to be the President of the greatest land on the face of the Earth. And thank you for coming. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:01 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Trent McKnight, president, and Jennifer Edwards, secretary, National Future Farmers of America Organization.