

June 27 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2002

a global nature as well today. And therefore, we have repeatedly mentioned that joint efforts are essential if you want to be a success in this fight.

Therefore, we welcome the firm position of the U.S. President in this regard. And therefore, we welcome his courage and consistency with which he persists his policies, in spite of any elements that interfere

with that. And we expect that our interaction will make a significant and decisive contribution to the elimination of terrorism worldwide.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:54 a.m. in the Delta Lodge at the Kananaskis Village resort. A reporter referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Statement on the Supreme Court Decision on Cleveland's School Choice Program

June 27, 2002

This landmark ruling is a victory for parents and children throughout America. By upholding the constitutionality of Cleveland's school choice program, the Supreme Court has offered the hope of an excellent education to parents and children throughout our country. This decision clears the way for other innovative school choice programs, so that no child in America will be left behind.

School choice offers proven results of a better education, not only for children enrolled in the specific plan but also for children whose public schools benefit from the competition. The Milwaukee choice plan, begun in the early 1990s, has resulted in substantially improved reading and math

scores for thousands of low-income children. The program has also had a positive impact on the entire public school system, which has responded to competition with better results.

The education reforms we enacted earlier this year give unprecedented new options to parents of children trapped in low-performing schools. My budget builds on this act by adding important new options to empower parents—particularly low-income families—to improve their children's education. I urge Congress to move quickly to build on the momentum generated from this decision to enact my education priorities.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Defense Appropriations Legislation

June 27, 2002

I commend the Members of the House for their strong, bipartisan show of unity in our war against terrorism with passage of the defense appropriations bill. I urge the Senate to work in a similar bipartisan fashion and pass the bill in July so that our men and women in the armed services

have every resource they need to continue defending freedom. It is critical in this time of war that the defense appropriations bill be at the front, not the end, of the legislative line. Our troops deserve nothing less.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Representative Connie Morella June 28, 2002

I hate to disagree with our distinguished honoree, but the reason people are here, Connie, is because they love you, they trust you, and like me, want you reelected to the United States Congress.

I appreciate so very much the Morella boys for being here. That, of course, is Tony, the husband, Mark, the son, and Michael, the grandson, who led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. It's good to be here with the Morellas. It's clear that they love each other. They value their family. They understand that in family you can find strength of purpose and love and compassion and comfort. And I want to thank the Morella men for allowing Connie to serve our Nation and encouraging her to serve our Nation. She makes an important contribution, and therefore, you do as well.

I regret that my wife wasn't here today. But I want you to know she's doing fine. I can't tell you how proud I am of the First Lady. She really wasn't interested in politics when I asked her to marry me and frankly didn't care for politicians, if the truth be known. [Laughter] But now the people of the country are figuring out why I asked her to marry me. She's calm and steady and a gracious lady. A lot of people wonder why she said yes. [Laughter] But we're doing great. Many of you have said—some of you have said you pray for me and my family. It is the greatest gift you can give a President and his family, and for that, I'm grateful.

I appreciate Governor Ehrlich being here today as well—[laughter]—I meant Congressman Ehrlich. I thank Congressman Gilchrest, Wayne Gilchrest. There you are, Wayne. Thanks for coming. I appreciate you being here.

So here's what I like about Connie: She speaks clearly. After all, she was an English professor. [Laughter] A lot of people think I probably need to spend a little quality

time with her. [Laughter] But she's an independent soul. She's a highly intellectual person who is with you if she thinks you're right and is gracious enough to explain to you when she thinks she's wrong—when you're wrong. And I respect that a lot. And I hope the people of this district respect that about Connie. She's an incredibly thoughtful soul, with a big heart, who cares deeply for the constituents she represents and loves her country too.

You know, I like to tell people, when you find somebody who's good and decent and honorable, you have a civic duty to make sure that that person remains in the Halls of Congress.

I appreciate so very much her focus on homeland defense, and so should you. I mean, the defense of our homeland is an incredibly important part of the national life these days. And after all, Connie represents the National Institutes of Health and does it well, I might add. She understands the important role that the National Institutes of Health can play in fighting off bioterrorism, preparing response for our Nation. She's an advocate of doing what is right in the budget for the National Institutes of Health. For no other reason, people ought to send her back, because she's got a clear vision of the importance of research for our country.

But as well she worked hard right after September the 11th to secure emergency funding for the Montgomery County's local police forces and emergency response teams, those who worked so hard to help rescue and repair lives in the wake of that tragedy.

As you know, I've asked the Congress to think boldly about how best to protect the homeland. I mean, after all, we've got 100 different agencies involved with homeland defense. They're scattered all over Washington. And it seems like to me that