

Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders July 24, 2002

Legislative Agenda

The President. Today I've had the honor of talking to Members of the United States Congress—these good folks happen to be Democrats—about how to leave behind a legacy of a more secure America. We're talking about an incredibly important piece of legislation that will be voted on this Friday. It's a legislation to create a Department of Homeland Security; it's really a piece of legislation to make America a safer place.

And I want to thank the leaders who are here for their willingness to put partisanship aside and focus on what's best for the American people. I believe we're going to get a good bill on Friday out of the House. I ask the Senate to vote on the bill before they go home for their August vacation.

Secondly, we're making progress on a piece of legislation which will enable us

to say that we passed laws to help protect investors, 401(k) stockholders, from corporate fraud. This Government—this Government will investigate, will arrest, and will prosecute corporate executives who break the law. And the Justice Department took action today.

And finally, I am hopeful that after a lot of work, we can get a trade bill up on the floor of the House and the floor of the Senate before they go home for August as well. This is an important part of a legislative package necessary to help create jobs and keep the economy going.

Today was a day of action and a day of accomplishment in Washington, DC. And I want to thank the Members for that.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Statement on Northern Ireland July 24, 2002

I strongly support Prime Minister Tony Blair's statement in the House of Commons today. The United States joins with his Government and the Government of Ireland in holding paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland accountable when there is clear, convincing evidence of their use of violence or preparations for it.

The United States strongly backs the Good Friday agreement as the blueprint for peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland. Since its signing 4 years ago, the agreement has brought significant gains to the people of Northern Ireland, and it is a beacon of hope for people everywhere seeking to overcome histories of violence,

terror, and sectarian strife. It is the responsibility of all parties, including those associated with paramilitaries and those who are not, to work together to uphold the agreement and its institutions.

I condemn the recent violence that has marred the lives of the people of Northern Ireland, and I commend those political and civic leaders who have worked to stop it. Paramilitaries must end their violent activities, cease all preparations for them, and recognize the political process as the only valid vehicle for change. Those who cling to the violent ways of the past cannot be allowed to derail Northern Ireland's progress towards a more peaceful future.

Remarks at High Point University in High Point, North Carolina
July 25, 2002

Thanks for that warm welcome, and thanks for coming out today. I want to thank you all for fighting through the rain. It's part of my drought relief program. [Laughter] I do want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank all your fellow citizens for lining the road and being so gracious in their hospitality. I love coming to North Carolina. It's a fabulous State, full of fabulous people. I'm honored to be here.

And I'm glad my friend Tommy Thompson came with me. He was the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, and then I convinced him to come to Washington to head up the Department of Health and Human Services. I did so because I understand he knows health issues; he knows welfare issues; he knows a good system when he sees one and a system that needs to be reformed when he sees one. And I'm glad Tommy came to Washington. He's doing a heck of a job on behalf of the American people, and I want to thank you, Tommy.

I want to thank Richard Budd and all the folks here at High Point University for giving me a chance to come and discuss some important issues that face our Nation. It's a beautiful campus. The gymnasium could use a little air-conditioning. [Laughter] We'll try to keep the hot air down to a minimum. [Laughter] But we're thrilled to be here on this fine campus.

I also want to thank Jeff Miller of the High Point Regional Health System for—[applause]. We just had a fantastic and very interesting discussion about problems that affect patients, patients in North Carolina, health care patients in Nevada, problems that affect our docs. And I want to talk about some of that in a minute. But we just had a great discussion. I want to thank all the doctors and my fellow Americans who were there to share with me their

stories, some of which I will share with you in a minute.

I appreciate Don Palmisano, who is the head of the—president-elect of the American Medical Association out of New Orleans, Louisiana, who flew in for this event. I want to thank you for being here, Don, and I want to thank you for your support on the initiative which I'm fixing to talk about.

I also want to thank the mayors of some of the communities here. We've got the mayor of High Point, the mayor of Greensboro, and the mayor of Thomasville. I appreciate all three mayors coming. I want to thank my friend Elizabeth Dole for coming over today to say hello. I appreciate you being here, Elizabeth.

I want to thank members of the North Carolina health and medical community, all you who worry about your fellow Americans and who work hard to provide good, quality health care. Thank you for coming here today.

Every time I come to a community, I like to herald some of the heroes of the community. And today, when I landed in Air Force One, there to greet me was a citizen named Jane Lambert. She's a—she's been volunteering here in this community for 50 years. She has been working hard to make people's lives better. It didn't require a Government law saying, "Jane, you will help people in need." It required a good heart.

Jane has worked with Girl Scouts. She's worked through her church to bring meals to people who need food. She is the kind of person I call a soldier in the army of compassion. The truth of the matter is, the reason I like to introduce the Jane Lamberts of the world is because the great strength of America lies in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens who love—[applause]. So I want to thank Jane. I think