

Statement on Congressional Action on Legislation To Strengthen
AmeriCorps
June 19, 2003

I commend Congress, particularly Senators Bond and Mikulski and Representatives Boehner and Hoekstra, for working with my administration and taking swift action to pass the “Strengthen AmeriCorps Program Act.” The bill establishes accounting guidelines for the Corporation for National and Community Service that will help put AmeriCorps on a sound financial footing. It is also the essential first step toward maximizing enrollment this year to

benefit the nonprofit organizations that count on AmeriCorps members to offer help and hope to people in communities across the country.

I hope Congress will continue to show strong support for my effort to help every American answer the call to volunteer service and act quickly to strengthen and expand national service by passing the “Citizen Service Act.”

Message on the Observance of Juneteenth, 2003
June 19, 2003

I send greetings to those celebrating Juneteenth.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring “that all persons held as slaves” within the rebellious states “are, and henceforward shall be, free.” This news reached slaves slowly as word was passed by Union soldiers and individual plantation owners. Almost two years later, on June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, to declare the end of the Civil War and the freedom of the slaves.

Juneteenth commemorates General Granger’s announcement and provides an opportunity for people across America to

celebrate the end of slavery and the joy of freedom. On this day, I encourage all citizens to learn more about the rich heritage of African Americans and their many contributions to our Nation. With knowledge and understanding, we will continue our efforts to ensure that our society provides the opportunity for every person, of every race, to realize the promise of America.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a memorable celebration.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of
Brazil
June 20, 2003

President Bush. It’s my honor to welcome the President of our friend Brazil

to the Oval Office. This is the third meeting I will have had with the President. It