

(1) Under the authority of section 5303(b) of title 5, United States Code, the pay rates for each statutory pay system will be increased by 1.5 percent, effective on the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2004; and

(2) Under the authority of section 5304a of title 5, United States Code, locality-based comparability payments in the percentages set forth in the attached table will go into effect in January 2004.

Finally, the law requires that I include in this report an assessment of the impact of my decision on the Government's ability to recruit and retain well-qualified employees. I do not believe this decision will materially affect our ability to continue to attract and retain a quality Federal workforce. To the contrary, since any pay raise

above the 2 percent I have proposed would likely be unfunded, agencies would have to absorb the additional cost and could have to freeze hiring in order to pay the higher rates. Moreover, GS quit rates are at an all-time low of 1.7 percent per year, well below the overall average quit rate in private enterprise. Should the need arise, the Government has many compensation tools, such as recruitment bonuses, retention allowances, and special salary rates, to maintain the high-quality workforce that serves our Nation so very well.

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.

## Message on the 40th Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" Speech

*August 28, 2003*

I send greetings to those gathered to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s historic "I Have a Dream" speech.

Through his leadership, courage, and determination, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. brought tremendous good to our country. His vision and words caused Americans to examine their hearts and live up to the ideals of our Constitution.

In his speech 40 years ago, Dr. King expressed his dream that people would be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin. He viewed the summer of 1963 as a time for

America to renew its commitment to equality. Today, we have come a long way, but there is still work to do to realize Dr. King's dream. As we honor this important anniversary, I encourage all Americans to continue the march to equality and opportunity for all.

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.