

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the National
Emergency With Respect to Libya
June 30, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and section 505(c) of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, 22 U.S.C. 2349aa-9(c), I am transmitting a 6-month periodic report prepared by my Administration on the national emergency with respect to

Libya that was declared in Executive Order 12543 of January 7, 1986.

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. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 1.

Remarks at the KIPP DC: KEY Academy
July 1, 2003

Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. I'm honored that—I'm honored you'd have me—[laughter]—here at KIPP Academy. Susan, thanks for your hospitality.

I know something about KIPP Academy, the network. The reason I do is, when I was the Governor of Texas, I went to a school in Houston that was called KIPP Academy. Nobody had ever heard of it. I think Steve—is that you back there, Steve? No, it's not. I thought Steve was here. You look like Steve. [Laughter] And they said—the principal—and they said, "Come by the school." And it was full of kids that were not supposed to be able to learn. You know, our State at that time was suffering what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. Perhaps that's happening in places in the District as well. You see, when you lower the bar, that's what you get, low results. So they had la-

beled these kids, you know, unable to learn, difficult to learn.

So I go to this KIPP Academy. And first of all, I was overwhelmed by the spirit of the kids, the involvement of the parents, the dedication of the teachers, and the entrepreneurial spirit of the principal. And then I said, "Well, are you making any progress here at KIPP Academy with these so-called hard to educate?" And the answer was, "Yes. They're the best middle school in the city of Houston." The reason we knew is because we measured. We wouldn't have known that had we not measured.

The KIPP Academy sets high standards. It's got the absolute right attitude for education, in my judgment. First of all, it says, "Every child can learn. We refuse to condemn any child to mediocrity and failure. We have high standards; we have high expectations; and we're going to meet those

high standards and high expectations with a curriculum which works.”

And so I want to congratulate you, Susan, and the KIPP Academy entrepreneurs who are challenging mediocrity on a daily basis and raising standards for those who in some communities have been condemned to failure. Thanks for having us here, and thanks for the bright example you’ve set.

What we’re really here is to talk about how do we make sure that the education system works for everybody. That’s why the act that we passed out of Congress, the law, was called the No Child Left Behind Act. And the reason why it was called the No Child Left Behind Act, it set out a goal for the country that every child deserves a good education. And it said no child should be left behind, which means we’d better understand whether any—we’d better answer the question, “Is every child learning?”

But that wasn’t the case oftentimes in America, public schools. We didn’t know whether or not we were achieving what we expected. And so we passed this law. And the law basically said, in return for Federal dollars, the Federal Government will finally start asking the question, “What are the results?”—that we expect to spend money, and as a matter of fact, we set record levels of expenditure for elementary and secondary education programs and Title I programs. That’s an obligation of the Federal Government. We met the obligation with the largest budget increases in our history. But instead of just spending money, we’re starting to ask the question, “What’s happening in the classrooms?” And if things are good, we want to praise the schools that are working, like KIPP Academy. But if we find things are lousy and children are being left behind, instead of just accepting the status quo, it is now time for our society to challenge failure. And that’s what we’re doing.

And I’m proud of Washington, DC. Washington, DC, is willing to challenge

failure and to praise success. This is not an easy issue for some in the political process. It is hard to take on the established order, particularly when you have to blow the whistle on failure. Nobody likes to have the whistle blown. But for the sake of our children, we need to be blowing whistles. And so I appreciate very much the Mayor. Mayor Williams has stood strong, along with the Councilman Chavous. And I appreciate my friend David being here as well, for standing strong and making sure that the children—we focus on results, not process.

I want to thank very much my friend Rod Paige. When I hired—hired—I asked Rod to join me. I didn’t hire him. [*Laughter*] He gets hired by school boards, not by Presidents. [*Laughter*] I was interested in somebody that actually had been on the frontlines of public school education. He had a tough job in Texas. He was running the Houston Independent School District, which is a heck of a lot tougher than being President. [*Laughter*] And the results in Houston were exceptional because Rod challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations and raised the bar. And he understands you’ve got to hold people accountable in life. And so he’s doing a fine job for our country.

And Peggy, I appreciate you being here, too. Peggy is the head of the school board. That is a tough job. That’s a tough job, and I thank you for taking it on.

I appreciate the Members of Congress coming. Tom, I’m glad you’re here. I’m honored you’re here. He’s the chairman of the House Government Reform Committee. He is concerned about making sure DC functions well, its schools function well. He’s going to work closely with the Mayor. And Rodney Frelinghuysen is here as well. He’s the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the District of Columbia. I’m sure he and the Mayor spend a lot of time talking and coming up with the amount of money the Mayor thinks is appropriate

to run this important city. My only admonition is to make sure the potholes in front of the White House are full. [Laughter]

But I want to thank you guys for coming here today. We're going to talk about an extremely important initiative that will make a difference in the lives of children here in the city. And I want to describe it a little bit, this Federal initiative that is going to serve as a model for the rest of the country. I want my second home to become a model of excellence so that when people see the educational entrepreneurial spirit alive and well in DC, they realize they can do the same in their own communities.

Father McCarrick, thank you for coming, too, sir. I appreciate the—I appreciate your presence. I appreciate the excellence of the Catholic school system, not only here in Washington but around the country. I think it's very important for our fellow citizens to see the Catholic school system as a model of what is possible, how to provide a high-quality education at a reasonable cost per student. And it's an interesting—these Catholic schools can serve not only as an interesting go-by but as a model as well for other schools in the District.

Listen, the No Child Left Behind Act understands that there must be accountability, and the way you achieve accountability is you measure. And so now we're measuring a lot. We're measuring annually to determine whether or not the children can read and write and add and subtract. We've got to know that. The first fundamental question in terms of achieving educational excellence is to measure and to provide the test and to see whether or not the children have got the basics—and if they do, recognize that the curriculum being used is working; if they don't, recognize something has got to change.

See, the measurement is not meant to punish; it is meant to remedy. It is meant to serve as a diagnostic tool. No one ever wants to measure, to hold a good teacher up and say, "You know, gosh, you've got

a good heart, but you're doing a lousy job. Therefore, you're a failure." That's not the reason you measure. The reason you measure is you say to a teacher, "You've got a great heart, but you need to fine-tune what you're doing because it's not working right now."

You've also got to measure in order to begin to effect change that's just more—when there's more than talk, there's just actual—a paradigm shift. That's what measurement does. It provides the foundations for significant change.

Accountability is important. But accountability without consequences means nothing. So in other words, if you measure and find success, there needs to be—something needs to happen, which is praise. And parents will say, "Well, gosh, if that's successful, I think we'll continue sending my child to that school." But if parents don't have any options other than a public school system, there's no accountability—really no accountability. In other words, if there's nothing else can happen, if you find failure and you're stuck, why measure? And so one of the things that we're going to talk about today is making sure that any accountability system has got—has got some oomph to it, by trusting parents to make the right decision for their particular child.

The District of Columbia needs to improve. Let me just put it bluntly. [Laughter] There are some great schools in the District, and there are some lousy schools in the District. There has been a recent measurement to determine how the District schools do relative to other schools around the country. Ninety—in grades four and eight—those were the two grades tested—the District of Columbia scored below every single State in the Union in terms of basic skills. And that's unacceptable. It's unacceptable to the Mayor. It's unacceptable to the City Council. It's unacceptable to Peggy. It's unacceptable, most importantly, to the parents. And we need to do something about it.

And the Mayor and the City Council and Peggy have started by invigorating a—having a vigorous charter school program. See, charter schools say to the world, “If you’ve got a better idea, show up and show us whether or not you can do a better job of challenging the status quo, if the status quo is failing.” And that’s what’s happening in Washington, and I want to applaud the city for being on the front edge of the charter school initiative.

I’m going to work with Congress—and I appreciate the Members of Congress being here to—we need to boost our budget for charter schools. I proposed \$320 million for charter schools. I want to work specifically with the city of Washington, DC. The Mayor and I have—I answer the Mayor’s calls, and he occasionally answers mine. [Laughter] And one of the things that he likes to talk about is the need to make sure that the charter school system here is—receives good Federal attention. After all, the Federal Government has got a lot to do with how the schools in Washington, DC, are funded. So we’re committed to a charter school program in my administration. I think it’s one of the options that ought to be made available to parents.

KIPP Academy is a charter school. The money follows the child, and that makes sense. The problem is that oftentimes there’s not enough charter schools in certain communities to meet the demand. And there is big demand here in Washington, DC, for alternatives other than the status quo. And so I’ve got an idea that I want to share with you today about how to meet that demand. And that is, I’m going to request \$75 million from the Congress for what we call a choice incentive fund. This will be basically scholarships for students to be able to use the money as they see fit, public or private. Obviously, private is where you’re going to require tuition.

Fifteen million of that dollars will stay here in Washington. It is the beginning of a school choice program funded by the

Federal Government for students here in Washington, DC. The scholarships will range up to \$7,500 per student. If the private school charges less than that, then the remainder, the difference between \$7,500 and the tuition, goes back into the pot so that more children will be funded. We think this will affect a couple of thousand children here in Washington, DC. It is the beginning of an experiment that will show whether or not private school choice makes a difference in quality education in public schools. I happen to believe it will.

I do believe that competition will serve its purpose, and that will—other schools will say, “Wait a minute. We’re losing folks. We better try something differently. The accountability system says we’re not doing so well. We need to remember the customer.” The customer happens to be the parent and the student. And I believe the change will cause folks to want to invigorate their own curriculum and to figure out what’s going right or wrong. It will certainly shake the system up. And it sounds like to me the system needs to be shaken up if you’re not doing as well as you should be here in Washington, DC.

People say, “Well, gosh, if you’re going to do that, then there will be no accountability.” Of course, if a school receives a scholarship, then the school needs to be held accountable as well. The same accountability system applies to the recipient school as it does to the public schools in Washington. We want there to be accountability throughout the system. Father McCarrick wouldn’t mind that at all. He runs a system that is anxious to be held accountable. And so if a private scholarship ends up in a Catholic school, people will be held to account. After all, it’s taxpayers’ money. We want to know. We want to know whether it—in a public school or a private school, whether or not the children are learning.

Now, if there—if we run out of—if there’s more applicants than scholarships,

then people will say, "What's going to happen?" Well, there needs to be a lottery. I mean, there needs to be a fair way—this isn't—to make sure that everybody has got an equal shot. And then, of course, the Congress is going to want to know whether or not the program is working, just like the President will want to know. And so therefore, what we'll end up doing is, Rod will measure and then submit a report to the Congress on an annual basis, so that people will begin to see firsthand whether or not what we're attempting to do in Washington, DC, has got the positive effect that a lot of us think it will have.

Look, what we're trying to do is to give parents more options. Step one was to measure. Step two was to post the results so everybody knows, so they can compare school to school. Step three is to say, "In any accountability system, there has to be consequences." And the consequences, when it comes to education, for failure is the parent says, "I've had it. I'm going to a different option for my particular child."

The other thing that's important is we've got to have the philosophical notion that we cannot have a two-tiered education system in America, one tier for those who can afford a certain type of school and one tier for those who can't. And so this plan is an attempt to say: The two-tiered deal is over with; we're starting to a new tier.

And there's a demand for this, by the way, in Washington. The Washington Scholarship Fund is an interesting idea where people came together—I presume from the business community and others—and put up money to help children. There are 1,000 applications last year for 100 slots. It's a measurement, a data point, a measurement of demand, where people are interested in doing something differently.

Virginia Walden-Ford, who I met, is the executive director of the DC Parents for School Choice. She says that hundreds of calls come in each week to her organization. Parents are wondering, "Do I have

a choice? Is there something else I can do? I'm frustrated."

Virginia is a good person to be running the program. She—mom of three—her youngest son looked like he was a—I guess the best way to describe it would be a train wreck. He wasn't doing well in the public school system. He might say the system quit on him, but he certainly quit on the system. And Virginia pulled him up and got him into a Catholic school. The ninth grade on, he became a student. He was challenged. It raised his standards. He's now a United States Marine. He's preparing to go to the college. It's a wonderful story about Archbishop Carroll High School. More importantly, it's a wonderful story about a mom who never gave up.

So she's taking that experience and is now trying to help other parents who are frustrated and other parents who are looking for different options for a particular child. I want to thank her for that very much. Here's what she said. She said, "Low-income parents don't want handouts. They just want the same opportunities to send their children to schools that meet their children's needs." And I appreciate that comment, and I appreciate you working on this.

I appreciate meeting Valarie Garland today. We had a very emotional meeting. Valarie is concerned, frustrated, worried. We had a—we shed a tear or two about the future. Valarie is a single mom—which, by the way, is the toughest job in America. It's really hard to be a single mom in our country. And then she's a single mom who is worried about the education system, on top. And her emotions came forth, and we had a good visit about trying to provide a hopeful future for Valarie's child. And I believe we can get the Congress to move on this. It will make a difference in a lot of people's lives here in Washington.

Let me summarize by saying, first of all, there's a lot of great teachers in America. There's a lot of great teachers right here in Washington, DC. There's a lot of good,

hard-working folks. And we need to always keep in mind the need to praise our teachers and to praise people on the frontlines of education.

Sometimes, however, the system, the curriculum, whatever it may be, it becomes stagnant. And wherever we find mediocrity, this society has an obligation to challenge that. And that's what we're talking about today. We're talking about making sure no child gets left behind by focusing on each child. And the best way to focus on each child is to look at results and then remember the decisionmaker, who the decisionmaker is in society. The decisionmaker is the mom or the dad.

The District of Columbia is setting a bright example of what is possible in education reform. And I'm here to praise the public school system of Washington, DC, and for those who are working hard to make it better. I'm here to praise the elected officials of Washington, DC, for your willingness to step out and to confront fail-

ure when you see it and to praise success when you see it as well.

And I'm here to say to the parents of Washington, DC: We care about your children. Each child matters. We believe every child can learn. We're going to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations in the Nation's Capital and around the country, because we know a more hopeful America depends on this Nation's capacity to educate each and every child.

I want to thank you for coming, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. in a classroom at the school. In his remarks, he referred to Susan Schaeffler, principal, KIPP DC: KEY Academy; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Kevin Chavous and David Catania, members, District of Columbia City Council; Peggy Cooper Cafritz, president, DC Board of Education; Representative Tom Davis; and Theodore E. Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington.

Remarks at a Reenlistment Ceremony on the 30th Anniversary of the All-Volunteer Force

July 1, 2003

Please be seated. Welcome. Thank you all very much. Welcome to the White House. We're joined today by 30 men and women who have chosen to reenlist in the United States Armed Forces. Each of them decided years ago to serve and defend our country. Today they reaffirm their commitment and take the oath again.

Like many thousands of other soldiers, sailors, airmen, coast guardsmen, and marines who will reenlist this year, these men and women are answering the highest call of citizenship. They have stood between the American people and the dangers of the world, and we are glad they are staying on duty.

I want to thank Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, for joining us, and members of the defense team. I want to thank Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and Pete Pace, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. I want to thank James Roche, the Secretary of the Air Force, Les Brownlee, the Acting Secretary of the Army, H.T. Johnson, the Acting Secretary of the Navy, for being with us today.

I appreciate Admiral Vernon Clark, the Chief of Naval Operations, for being here; General Michael W. Hagee, the Commandant of the Marine Corps; General John M. Keane, Acting Chief of Staff for the Army. I appreciate Terry D. Scott,