

Statement on the Death of Ray Charles

June 18, 2004

Ray Charles Robinson was a hero—the child who faced down adversity and worked hard to become one of the greatest examples of the American Dream. His songs have lifted us in times of sorrow and helped us celebrate in times of joy.

His music and his optimism touched the lives and hearts of millions and spanned

generations, cultures, races, and backgrounds. People from all walks of life would come together and tap their feet as one when Ray Charles played.

Laura and I send our prayers and condolences to his family and friends.

Message on the Observance of Juneteenth, 2004

June 18, 2004

I send greetings to those celebrating Juneteenth.

On June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger and his Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, bringing word of the Emancipation Proclamation which had been issued more than 2 years earlier. On hearing the news that “all persons held as slaves” in the rebellious States were “thenceforward, and forever free,” former slaves celebrated their new freedom.

Today, African Americans in Texas and other parts of the country observe June 19, also known as Juneteenth, with cookouts, family gatherings, parades, and other com-

munity events. Juneteenth celebrates the truth that freedom is God’s gift to every man and woman. This day also recognizes the progress America has made in ensuring that our Nation lives up to our founding principles of liberty, equality, and justice, and represents an occasion to reaffirm our commitment to these principles.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

The President’s Radio Address

June 19, 2004

Good morning. This week, we received more good news showing that our economy is gaining momentum. The Department of Labor reported State-by-State job gains for the month of May. In every region of our Nation and across many growing industries, more Americans are finding work. The State of Arizona added 8,400 new jobs in May. New Jersey gained 9,500 new jobs.

Pennsylvania added 10,700 new jobs. And North Carolina picked up 13,400 new jobs.

The unemployment rate has fallen in 46 out of the 50 States over the last year. And many of the new jobs are being created in industries that pay above average wages, such as construction and education and manufacturing.