

mind that the school system that you're going to rebuild is going to be a great school system, because you've given it such a great start. Charter schools work. It makes a lot of sense.

And so I've come to Green to say, thanks to the citizens of New Orleans who pay attention to the quality of education; thanks to the parents of this school who set an example by being involved; and thanks to the leadership. Doc, you're running a good show here. I'm proud of your job.

Thanks for letting me come by. I'm honored to be back down here. I'm reminded of the New Orleans Saints football team that—[applause]—here's a team that a lot of people didn't give much hope for—did they?—when the season started. And it rose; it became a national story. It was a

factor in the championship. The same thing is going to happen to the city. You got work to do. You got work to do. I'm going to keep coming down so long as I'm the President. And then after I'm the President, I'm going to slide in incognito. [Laughter]

God bless you all. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:44 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Anthony Recasner, principal, Samuel J. Green Charter School; Gaylen David Picard, wife of former Louisiana State Superintendent of Education Cecil J. Picard; Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA; Lt. Gov. Mitchell J. Landrieu of Louisiana; and Andrea Green-Jefferson, wife of Rep. William J. Jefferson.

Statement on the Death of Mario Chanes de Armas *March 1, 2007*

Cuban patriot Mario Chanes de Armas was a political prisoner of the Castro regime for 30 years, one of the longest sentences of any political prisoner in the world. Like so many Cubans, he sought a democratic Cuban society only to see his quest betrayed by a Castro dictatorship. Mario Chanes was one of the original *plantados*, Cuban political prisoners who

were unyielding in their fervent desire for a free Cuba. His patriotism and strong sense of purpose are examples to all freedom-loving people. Laura joins me in sending our thoughts and prayers to his family and friends.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba.

Remarks on Departure for New Albany, Indiana *March 2, 2007*

March 1 Tornadoes in Alabama and Georgia

Yesterday afternoon I spoke to Governor Riley of Alabama. This morning I spoke to Governor Perdue of Georgia, expressing my personal condolences as well as the condolences of the Nation for those who

lost their lives in the recent tragedies in those two States.

Tomorrow I'm going down to Georgia and Alabama. I go down with a heavy heart. I go down knowing full well that I'll be seeing people whose lives were turned upside down by the tornadoes. I'll do my very best to comfort them. I ask