

Carlos became an A-student and president of his eighth grade class. He now attends high school at Georgetown Day. Calvin is a fifth-grader at Assumption; I'm told that he's running for "Student of the Month." [Laughter] Something I never achieved. [Laughter]

Pam has a big smile on her face when she comes to talk about the education her boys are receiving. "The main benefit of this program is that I can drop off my sons at school with peace of mind. It's safe, and I know they are working up to their level." That's what Pam said. I believe every parent in America should have that same peace of mind and every school in America should ensure that its students are working up to their fullest of potentials. I applaud our Nation's Catholic schools. I will continue to work to help these schools reach more children in need so that our children have the skills they need to realize the full promise of the United States of America.

Finally, to realize the promise of America, we must have comprehensive immigration reform that enforces our laws and upholds the dignity of every single person in the United States. And now is the time for the United States Congress to get a bill to my desk that I can sign.

I thank you for your fine tradition. I applaud you for the love you—of neighbor you show through your organizations and your churches. I ask that you pray for our soldiers and their families in harm's way. And I ask that you pray that in a troubled world, America may always remain a beacon of hope and of freedom.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:43 a.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Leonard A. Leo, member, Board of Directors, National Catholic Prayer Breakfast; and Archbishop of Washington Donald W. Wuerl.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Parochial Education Leaders and Parents

April 13, 2007

Secretary Spellings and I have just had the privilege of talking to some of our country's leading educational entrepreneurs. We had the privilege of talking to parents whose lives have been positively affected by our Catholic school system. One of the great assets in the United States is the Catholic schools, which oftentimes educate the so-called "hard to educate." And they do so in such a spectacular way.

The question is, how do we make sure that this important asset is sustainable? How do we make sure that our Catholic schools meet the needs of parents like Patricia, meet the expectations of some of our educational leaders like Ben. And one way is for the Federal Government to pro-

vide opportunity scholarships for parents, so that they can redeem that scholarship at a school of their choice.

We've got such a program like that here in Washington, DC. It's been a very successful program, and Congress needs to make sure it gets fully funded. If any Congressman doubts the utility of a program, all they've got to do is speak to Wendy Cunningham, whose daughter takes advantage of this special funding for people, that enables her to say, "My school isn't meeting the needs, and therefore, I'd like to make another choice." A parental choice is a very important part of educational excellence. And one way to make sure that that's the case is not only to fully fund

the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship but to provide these kinds of scholarships for school systems outside of Washington.

For example, we've just heard from Margaret Dames, who has got a marvelous school program in Bridgeport, Connecticut. And it seems like it makes sense to me for a parent in Bridgeport to be able to have the same kind of opportunity that a parent here in Washington, DC, has. Congress needs to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act as well. We want all schools to be excellent. We want every school, public or parochial, to meet expectations and to give our children the skill sets necessary to realize the great promise of the country.

One thing is for certain: If you're interested in educational excellence, you can look at the Catholic schools in the United States of America, because they provide it, and for that, this country is very grateful.

Thank you all for coming; appreciate your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Patricia Weitzel-O'Neill, superintendent of Catholic schools, Archdiocese of Washington, DC; Ben Ketchum, assistant principal, St. Ann's Academy; and Margaret A. Dames, superintendent of schools and director of the Office for Education, Diocese of Bridgeport, CT.

The President's Radio Address *April 14, 2007*

Good morning. This week, I extended an invitation to congressional leaders of both parties to come to the White House so we can discuss the emergency war funding our troops are waiting for. When we meet on Wednesday, I look forward to hearing how Members of Congress plan to meet their responsibilities and provide our troops with the funding they need.

Supporting our troops is a solemn responsibility of all elected officials in Washington, DC. So 68 days ago, I sent Congress an emergency war spending bill that would provide the vital funds needed for our troops on the frontlines. But instead of approving this funding, Democrats in Congress have spent the past 68 days pushing legislation that would undercut our troops. They passed bills that would impose restrictions on our military commanders and set an arbitrary date for withdrawal from Iraq, giving our enemies the victory they desperately want.

The Democrats' bills also spend billions of dollars on domestic projects that have nothing to do with the war, such as funding for tours of the United States Capitol and for peanut storage. And after passing these unacceptable bills in the House and Senate, Democratic leaders then chose to leave town without sending any legislation to my desk.

The Senate came back to Washington earlier this week, but the House is still on its Easter recess. Meanwhile, our troops are waiting for the funds. And to cover the shortfall, our military may be forced to consider what Army General Pete Schoomaker has called "increasingly draconian measures."

In the next few days, our military leaders will notify Congress that they will be forced to transfer \$1.6 billion from other military accounts to make up for the gaps caused by Congress's failure to fund our troops in the field. That means our military will