

Statement on the 50th Anniversary of the Integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas
September 25, 2007

Fifty years ago today, nine students endured bitterness and violence because of the color of their skin and because of their convictions. As an Arkansas high school turned into a battleground for equality, the bravery of the Little Rock Nine inspired a generation of Americans.

Today, we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the integration of Central High

School. This anniversary reminds us of our Nation's struggle to fulfill its founding promise for all Americans. We are also reminded of the resilience of the heroes who sacrificed for justice and equality. We honor their courage, and we resolve to continue their work to make America a more perfect Union.

Statement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress
September 25, 2007

Earlier today the 2007 Nation's Report Card, also known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, was released. The news is outstanding. Eighth graders achieved their highest scores ever in math, while fourth graders set records in both reading and math. African American and Hispanic students posted alltime highs in a number of categories, which represents progress toward closing the achievement gap.

These scores confirm that No Child Left Behind is working and producing positive results for students across the country. Since No Child Left Behind became law in 2002, the States have been setting standards and holding schools accountable for ensuring that every child can read and do math at grade level. We are successfully challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations and continuing to make significant progress in reforming our schools.

As we commemorate the integration 50 years ago of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, we are reminded of the sacrifices students and their families have made in pursuit of a better education. Today's results demonstrate America's progress in making their dreams a reality, but we have more work to do. Now is not the time to turn back the clock on educational accountability and real options for parents, which No Child Left Behind provides.

The successes detailed in the Nation's Report Card highlight the importance of reauthorizing No Child Left Behind. I have proposed a number of ways to improve the law, by increasing flexibility, helping struggling schools, and empowering parents with more choices. I look forward to continuing to work with lawmakers of both parties to strengthen this important law.