

I am proud that all of you are working with us to achieve that goal. And if we keep working, I still think we will get it done.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas J. Scotto, president, National Association of Police Organizations, who introduced the President; Attorney General Jeremiah W. Nixon of Missouri; Mayor Colette Lafuente of Poughkeepsie, NY; and Mary Beth Talley, who protected her friend Heather McDonald during the shooting at Wedgewood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX.

Statement on Signing Legislation Establishing Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

October 21, 1999

I am pleased today to sign into law S. 323, which creates the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park in Colorado as America's 55th national park.

The Black Canyon, carved over eons by the unyielding waters of the Gunnison River, is a true natural treasure. Its nearly vertical walls, rising half a mile high, harbor one of the most spectacular stretches of wild river in America. No other canyon in North America combines the remarkable depth, narrowness, and sheerness of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison.

This bipartisan bill demonstrates once again that preserving our environment for future generations is a cause that transcends party lines. In that spirit, I urge Congress to fully fund my lands legacy initiative this year, and to work with me to secure permanent funding to continue these efforts well into the 21st century. Together, we can ensure that other treasures like the Black Canyon are preserved for all time.

Statement Commemorating the Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin

October 21, 1999

Four years ago today, according to the Hebrew calendar, Yitzhak Rabin was murdered by an assassin in Tel Aviv. He was a Prime Minister, a general, a diplomat, and a coura-

geous soldier in the battle for peace. All of us who were his friends still mourn his death.

Twelve days from now, world leaders will gather in Oslo to honor Yitzhak Rabin's memory. I will attend on behalf of the American people. It was in Oslo, 6 years ago, that Israelis and Palestinians made the crucial decision to try to work together to achieve peace. Now, Prime Minister Barak, Chairman Arafat, and I will come together in Oslo to build on that legacy and move closer to Rabin's goal: a permanent peace between Israel and the Palestinian people.

There is much hard work ahead, with difficult decisions for all sides. But as we look back in sorrow to mourn the passing of a great man, we must do everything in our power on behalf of the cause to which he gave his life.

Statement on House Action on Education Legislation

October 21, 1999

Making our schools work for all America's children is the most important challenge we face. By passing H.R. 2 today, the House took an important step toward improving educational opportunities for the Nation's most disadvantaged students. Although I have a number of concerns with this bill, I am pleased that H.R. 2 reflects a bipartisan consensus on several principles of the education reform plan I sent Congress earlier this year. As I said in my State of the Union Address, the Federal Government has a responsibility not only to invest more in our poorest schools, but to demand more results in return.

In particular, the bill continues the work of standards-based reform, expands public school choice, and recognizes the importance of holding schools accountable for results. I am pleased that a solid bipartisan majority in the House voted to reject the false promise of vouchers. I am also pleased that the House, by passing the Mink amendment, chose to incorporate gender equity provisions in this legislation.

As the reauthorization process continues, I will work with Congress to improve certain aspects of this bill, including provisions for