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And you can help. You can help by talking to the Congresspeople from your district and the Senators from your States. I truly believe—I believe you can have a great presence here in Washington. I know there's a lot of frustrated folks outside in the country that say, "Well, I can't influence Washington." I disagree. I think you can. I truly think you can.

I think one of the reasons why we've gone as far as we have in the tax relief plan is because a lot of people in America are beginning to hear reality and hear the truth that we've got enough money to meet needs and let people keep their own money. A lot of people are beginning to realize that this is a plan that is fair, an eminently fair plan. If you pay taxes, you ought to get relief.

The idea of Washington, DC—of people in Washington saying, "We're going to have targeted tax cuts"—you know what that says to me? It says, people can decide you win, and you don't win, and that's not good public policy. It seems like, to me, if you pay taxes, you ought to get relief, and I think that's the American way.

I think most Americans understand the role of our Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which small businesses can flourish, in which people can work hard to realize their dream. So we're making great progress.

I remember campaigning during last summer, and people would say, "Well, are you ready to abandon your tax relief plan? It doesn't seem like anybody wants it in America." And I said, "No, I'm not abandoning it. It's the right thing to do. It's the absolute right thing to do." And so now, the debate no longer is, are we going to have tax relief? The debate is, how large will the tax relief package be? And I appreciate your helping getting us to this point.

But we need to work more, because until I sign that bill, I'm going to be relentless on the subject. It is the absolute right thing to do for America. It is the right thing to trust people with their own money. It is the right thing for our economy to accelerate tax relief. It is the right thing to create an environment that is optimistic about the future by having real, meaningful tax reform. It's the right thing to get rid of the death tax. And the American people are hearing it, and they're coming our way.

And a lot of it has to do with leadership such as yourself, who go back to your States and your communities, and says, "Let's pay attention to what's going on in the Nation's Capital. It will affect us—have a direct effect on our livelihoods."

And so, I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come and make my point and make my case, and more importantly, Denise, I want to thank you and your organization for joining us as we get something positive done on behalf of the people.

I am so optimistic about the tone in Washington; it's beginning to change. The habitual name-calling seems to be subsiding somewhat. Even the President, me, when somebody says some things I don't like, I'm willing to smile. [*Laughter*] And there is a spirit of accomplishment; we're beginning to get something done. And that's so important. It's so important, so that when people look at Washington, they're not disgusted at what they see—what they see, as opposed to this needless partisanship that sends a signal that, all of a sudden, the people don't matter. We need to replace that with a spirit of, at least, respectful disagreement, and I think we're making pretty good progress.

So I'm pleased with the progress we're making. I'm mindful that we've got a lot more work to do, and I want to thank you all for giving me the chance to come and make my case.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:11 p.m. in Presidential Hall at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Denise Marie Fugo, chairman, National Restaurant Association.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

April 2, 2001

Trade Policy

The President. It's my honor to host a discussion on trade and its advantages to our country. I want to thank the leaders of the House and the Senate in both parties for

being here. We've got a lot of work to do in order to get trade promotion authority, but I'm confident that we can work together to do so. It's in our Nation's best interest that we trade. It's in the interest of those who provide jobs. It's in the interest of our farmers and ranchers. It's in the interest of small-business owners. And as I was reminded, it's in the interest of those of us who care about our values as to how to spread our values around the world.

This is an issue that is going to require close cooperation between members of the Republican Party and the Democrat Party. But that's achievable because trade is an American issue, and it's an important American issue.

So I look forward to working with the Members. I'm honored you all are here. Thank you for coming. And Ambassador Zoellick, who is the Trade Representative, is working hard on the Hill. And when you all get back from recess, we'll be working with you to see if we can advance the cause.

Thanks for coming.

U.S. Navy Aircraft Incident

Q. Any progress on the Chinese, Mr. President?

The President. Nothing more to report.

Q. Is it safe to assume they boarded the plane?

The President. Nothing more to report. Gregory [David Gregory, NBC News], give it a rest, will you? [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:19 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With the Congressional Hispanic Caucus

April 2, 2001

I thank you all for coming. It's my honor to welcome Chairman Reyes and members of the Hispanic Caucus here. I thank them for coming. It's going to give us a very good chance to get to know each other on a personal basis, as well as to talk about some issues that are of deep concern to the Members of the Congress. And Mr. Chairman, I'm honored to have you here.

One of the things that I know the chairman knows is that I respect the Hispanic culture a lot. When I was a Governor for the State of Texas, I used to remind my fellow Texans that our State was richer as a result of the Hispanic culture. And I look forward to working with the members here on a variety of issues, not the least of which is to make sure the world is more peaceful, more educated, and more prosperous.

So, thank you all for coming. Thank you for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:24 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Silvestre Reyes, chairman, Congressional Hispanic Caucus. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message on the Observance of National Library Week

April 2, 2001

I am pleased to join my fellow Americans in observing National Library Week.

An educated citizenry provides the foundation for a free and democratic society. Libraries promote the sharing of knowledge, connecting people of all ages with valuable information resources. These dynamic and modern institutions, and the librarians who staff them, add immeasurably to our quality of life.

Libraries serve as important centers for collecting, storing, and organizing information. Each year, more than 100,000 books are published in the United States alone, and the U.S. government publishes as many documents. Even beyond these numbers are incredible volumes of newspapers, magazines, and other copyrighted material.

In public, government, professional, or academic facilities, librarians help individuals use numerous resources to complete the simplest or most complex of research-related tasks. This ability to search for information from the oldest manuscripts to the latest references available demonstrates the enduring versatility of libraries.