

Statement on the Congressional Conference Agreement on Education Reform Legislation

December 11, 2001

The education of every child in America must always be a top priority. I commend the conferees for agreeing on a series of profound reforms to help provide our children the best education possible. I also thank the bipartisan leadership of the conference chair, Congressman Boehner, as well as Senators Kennedy and Gregg and Congressman Miller, for taking major steps toward improving education throughout our country.

The conference agreement will ensure that no child in America is left behind, through historic education reforms based on real accountability, unprecedented flexibility for States and school districts, greater local control, more options for parents, and more funding for what works. I urge Members of the House and Senate to act soon and send me this legislation so that States and school districts can begin implementing these important reforms.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Economic Team

December 12, 2001

Economic Stimulus Package

Thank you all for coming. I've just met with my top economic team to discuss the importance of an economic stimulus package to our—to the future of our economy. We strongly agree that we need an economic stimulus package, and I'm hopeful we'll be able to achieve one.

Last night I met with people from the United States Senate, Senators Breaux and Nelson and Miller, along with centrist Republicans, and we agree that there is enough votes to get a good package out of the Senate, a package that I think will help our economy, a package that these Democrats and Republicans think will help workers and the economy. And I am hopeful that with good work with the people around this table and with the leadership out of the Senate and the House, that we'll get a good package.

It's important to take care of those workers that have been affected by the attacks of September the 11th, and it's also important to focus on ways to grow our economy. And so this administration is committed to helping the Congress do its job, and that is to respond to the economic times we find ourselves in.

I want to thank you for coming. Happy holidays. Looking forward to seeing you at the event, the Christmas event at the White House. Oh, and see you at the next event. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Remarks on Signing the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act of 2001

December 12, 2001

Thank you all. For several years, the people of Afghanistan have suffered under one of the most brutal regimes—brutal regimes—in modern history, a regime allied with terrorists and a regime at war with women. Thanks to our military and our allies and the brave fighters of Afghanistan, the Taliban regime is coming to an end.

Yet, our responsibilities to the people of Afghanistan have not ended. We work for a new era of human rights and human dignity in that country. The agreement reached in Bonn last week means that in 10 days the international community will have a new partner, an interim government of a new Afghanistan.

We join those in the interim government who seek education and better health for every Afghan woman and child. And today, with the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act, we take an important step toward that goal.

I want to thank Laura for her introduction, and I want to thank her for her steadiness during this crisis. I want to thank Farida for her courage. I want to thank the Members of the House and the Senate who sponsored this piece of legislation, and all the Members of Congress who are here today.

I want to thank Sima Wali, who is the president and CEO of Refugee Women in Development, a key advocate for women's