

food is delivered in remote regions of that impoverished, poor, starving country.

The bill I sign today extends and strengthens our efforts. The Afghan Women and Children Relief Act commits the United States to providing education and medical assistance to Afghan women and children and to Afghan refugees in surrounding countries.

The overwhelming support for this legislation sends a clear message: As we drive out the Taliban and the terrorists, we are determined to lift up the people of Afghanistan. The women and children of Afghanistan have suffered enough. This great Nation will work hard to bring them hope and help. To the bill's sponsors, thank you from the bottom of our hearts. You show the true compassion of this great land.

May God bless the women and children of Afghanistan.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the Great Hall of the National Museum of Women in the Arts. In his remarks, he referred to Afghan human rights activist Farida; and Wilhelmina "Billie" Cole Holladay, founder and chair of the board, the National Museum of Women in the Arts. S. 1573, approved December 12, was assigned Public Law No. 107-81.

Statement on Representative Richard K. Armey's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

December 12, 2001

The country, the people of Texas, and the Congress have been well served by Congressman Dick Armey. As a fellow Texan, I know his effective leadership firsthand.

When he was a sophomore lawmaker, and a member of the then minority party, Dick Armey proved his mettle by authoring and passing a major base closure initiative that was signed into law. As majority leader, he has skillfully guided legislation through Congress; his dedication to reforming Government, lowering taxes, and simplifying the tax system has deeply influenced public policy.

I know Dick's dedication to public service will remain strong, even during his retire-

ment. His sense of humor, candor, and leadership will be sorely missed in Congress.

Laura and I extend our thanks to Dick, his wife, Susan, and their family, and we wish each of them the best in the future.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on the "Help America Vote Act"

December 12, 2001

I commend the House of Representatives for today's overwhelming passage of the bipartisan "Help America Vote Act." This legislation goes a long way toward adopting reforms advocated by the Ford/Carter Commission on Federal Election Reform and is based on principles I endorsed and recommended to Congress in July. The Ney-Hoyer bill is a good start in achieving these goals—it respects the value of every eligible vote and the primary role of State, county, and local governments in elections. I look forward to working with Congress to enact responsible election reform before the upcoming 2002 elections.

Statement on Congressional Action on Bioterrorism Defense Legislation

December 12, 2001

I commend Congressmen Tauzin and Dingell for successfully passing bipartisan legislation that will help meet our immediate bioterrorism defense needs. Their legislation includes many of my priorities, including proposals to expand the pharmaceutical stockpile, increase our supply of smallpox vaccines, strengthen State and local preparedness, and improve the safety of our food supply.

I look forward to working closely with Congressmen Tauzin and Dingell, as well as Senators Kennedy, Gregg, and Frist, to quickly reach a bipartisan consensus on this important legislation.