

**Statement on House of  
Representatives Action on Border  
Security Legislation**

*March 12, 2002*

I applaud the House for working in a bipartisan fashion to pass legislation that strengthens border security while recognizing the importance of keeping families together and making America a more welcoming society. Many immigrants who are otherwise eligible to become legal residents will be forced to leave the United States and their families unless a temporary extension is granted. The Senate should act quickly to pass this legislation and send it to my desk for signature.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released this statement in Spanish.

**Memorandum on Inventory of  
Federal Service Opportunities and  
Regulatory Barriers to Community  
and Other Service Activities**

*March 12, 2002*

*Memorandum for the Heads of Executive  
Departments and Agencies*

*Subject:* Inventory of Federal Service  
Opportunities and Regulatory Barriers to  
Community and Other Service Activities

I established by Executive Order 13254 of January 29, 2002, the USA Freedom Corps in order to encourage service and volunteerism in America. Building on our Nation's rich tradition of volunteer service, my Administration's policy is to foster a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility by promoting, expanding, and enhancing service opportunities for all Americans. Consistent with that policy, I hereby direct you to take the following steps:

- Within 30 days, identify and report to the Assistant to the President and Director of the USA Freedom Corps Office on the service opportunities both for your employees and for the public at large that are sponsored or administered by your department or agency. Such report shall also describe the ex-

tent to which this information is available to the public on your department or agency's website.

- Within 30 days, identify and report to the Assistant to the President and Director of the USA Freedom Corps Office on Federal regulatory and programmatic barriers in your department or agency to community and other service by Americans. Such report shall also include recommendations as to how to modify or repeal such barriers in order to enhance service opportunities.

This directive shall be construed consistent with Executive Order 13254.

**George W. Bush**

**Remarks at a Keep Our Majority  
Political Action Committee  
Reception**

*March 12, 2002*

*The President.* Thank you all. I am here because I am most interested in making sure Denny Hastert remains Speaker of the House. It's in the Nation's interest that he remain Speaker of the House.

And there's a reason why. First, he's a high quality person. I don't know if you all know this, but he was a wrestling coach at one time. He's the perfect Speaker. *[Laughter]*

He's a steady man; he's a joy to work with. I trust him; I trust his judgment. I really appreciate his can-do spirit. Denny's the kind of person that comes in the Oval Office and asks the question, "How can we get something done on behalf of the American people?" And I appreciate that attitude a lot. You know, some folks up here are looking for a fight. Denny's a guy looking for results.

And the record speaks pretty clearly. I remember first coming up here, and I told Denny that we've got to work together to get a tax cut for the American people. He said, "You bet." And as a result of his leadership, we got a tax cut for the American people, right at the right time.

History will judge that the tax cut was timely. It's a pretty simple theory, but one that works, and that is if the economy is slowing down, like it was, if you give people their own money back, that creates demand. And

demand creates production, and production equals jobs. And as a result of Denny's leadership, we passed important economic relief, called tax relief.

Some of them up here must be reading a different economics textbook than Denny and I are. There's a—for a while, they were talking about either stopping the tax relief, which I view as a tax increase. You never raise taxes in the midst of a recession, and Denny understands that, and I appreciate that.

We worked together on a really good education bill. We had some photos taken earlier, and one lady came through, said she was a teacher. I want to tell her and I want to tell everybody else that education has got to be one of the top domestic priorities, regardless of political party. And as a result of working closely together, we passed a substantial piece of education reform.

It is really good legislation. It is one that sets high standards, that refuses to accept mediocrity for any child, that challenges a system that quits on children early and just moves them through. That's not going to happen in America anymore, as far as we're concerned. We say we'll fund education; we'll focus money on where the needs are most, particularly amongst poor—the poor. But we expect everybody to learn. Not only do we expect everybody to learn, we firmly believe everybody can learn.

We've got a great reading initiative as a part of this bill. Denny understands what I know, that reading is the new civil right. If you can't read, you're going to be left behind. And we were deadly serious when we said no child will be left behind in America, and it starts with making sure every child learns to read.

We're on a mission here in America to achieve that objective. It, of course, trusts the local people—I mean, lest you think I forgot where I came from. I trust the Governors and the local school districts more than I trust people in Washington, DC, about educating children. So not only did we set high standards, we passed power out of Washington, DC. One size doesn't fit all. And if we expect to achieve excellence, we've got to trust local folks. And that's exactly the spirit of this bill.

As well, Denny understands the need to stimulate our economy even further. On the one hand, we want to make sure those whose lives were adversely affected on 9/11 receive help. But people in America don't want an unemployment check; they want a permanent paycheck. And therefore, as a result of his steadfast leadership, I had the honor of signing a economic stimulus package last Saturday in the Rose Garden, a package that not only helps workers but provides incentive for people to develop plant and equipment, which means jobs.

In other words, Denny understood what I understood: Jobs is the center of any good economic development plan. And Mr. Speaker, thanks to your steadfast leadership, I was able to sign a very good economic stimulus bill.

He's the kind of fella that doesn't say much, which is unusual here in Washington. *[Laughter]* He lets results speak for themselves.

History is going to show as well, we had a substantial legislative session in the House. As you know, as a result of the Speaker's leadership, we took a giant stride for improving our energy situation here in America. On the one hand, we encouraged more conservation and the development and modernization of our infrastructure, but on the other hand, we understand we've got to find more oil and gas in an environmentally friendly way here in America. The energy bill that passed the House was a really good piece of legislation. It is in our national security that we become less dependent on foreign sources of crude oil, and Denny Hastert understood that.

As well, we passed a good trade bill out of the House of Representatives. It's a bill that has got confidence in the productivity of American farmers and American workers. It says that if you're confident, you open up markets. If you're confident, you encourage trade as opposed to protectionism. And thanks to the Speaker's leadership, we got trade promotion authority out of the House of Representatives.

Thanks to the Speaker's leadership, we're focusing on research and development and at the same time send a firm, clear message: We will ban cloning in America.

Thanks to the Speaker's leadership, we passed a Faith-Based Initiative which recognizes that there are some in our society who hurt—badly hurt—and that the next step of good welfare reform is to rally the armies of compassion all across America, to encourage faith-based programs to help people who have got significant needs in our society.

The last four pieces of legislation—energy, trade, cloning, as well as Faith-Based Initiative—passed the House, but they haven't gotten out of the Senate yet. Denny Hastert is a can-do leader that focuses not on the political parties but focuses on what's best for America. And it's good for our country that he's the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

I submitted a budget that recognizes our Nation is in a long struggle for freedom, and Denny understands that. He understands that my most important job—and as a significant leader, his most important job—is to make sure the enemy doesn't attack America again, that our most important job is to protect innocent life here in our country.

We've got a great homeland defense strategy that the Speaker and I have been working on, as well as working with Tom Ridge. But I want to assure you all that I know this fact, that the best way to secure the homeland is to find the enemy, wherever he tries to hide, and bring them to justice. And that's precisely what we're going to do here in America.

I gave a speech the other day, and I talked about the fact that we've accomplished the first stage of our mission, and that is, we liberated a country from the clutches of one of the most barbaric regimes in the history of mankind. We unleashed our mighty military, along with coalition forces, and we routed out the Taliban. I can't tell you how proud I am—I'm so proud of our military, men and women who are making huge sacrifices on behalf of freedom and that have not let us down.

We're now in another phase of this war, which is to deny the enemy, the Al Qaida and any other affiliated terrorist group, any sanctuary anywhere in the world. We want them on the run. We want them to be treated like the international terrorists and international criminals that they are. And there-

fore, our policy not only continues to focus on Afghanistan; we have just finished—or are in the midst of wrapping up a significant battle in Afghanistan where we have achieved a mighty victory.

We've lost life, and for those lives we mourn. And I hope those family members understand that the lost life was for a giant cause, and that is the freedoms we hold dear.

But we're not through in Afghanistan. Any time we find Al Qaida or like-minded killers bunched up, we're going to get them. We'll be steady; we'll be relentless; we'll be resolved; we will not blink. I will continue to lead this coalition. History has called us into action, and we're not going to miss this opportunity to make the world more peaceful.

And so whether it be in Afghanistan or in Yemen or in the Philippines, perhaps in Georgia, this mighty Nation will use our resources to deny sanctuary to anybody who thinks they can harm the United States of America or our friends or our allies.

And there is a large cause at hand, as well, and Denny understands this. This great Nation must never allow the world's most dangerous regimes to develop the world's most dangerous weapons and hook up with terrorist organizations.

**Audience member.** That's right.

**The President.** As you know, I made that pretty clear to the world. I will continue to make that clear. This Nation must speak clearly and strongly for universal values. We must never waver in our love for freedom. We must never waver in our disdain for those who use murder to achieve political ends. And so long as I'm the President, I promise you I will be steadfast and strong in the face of evil.

And the good thing about America is that the Nation understands this. We're a united nation. We're bound together, regardless of political party or where we live, by this common love for freedom. And America understands the stakes, and they recognize that history has called us into action. And for that I am most grateful to the American people. It is such an honor to be the President of such a great land.

As well, American people are beginning to show the world that we're a compassionate nation as well, that we're a kind and decent

people. We're tough on the battlefield; we're really tough. But also at home, neighbors love neighbors more than ever before. And I like to remind my fellow citizens that if you're interested in joining the war against terror, love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. You see, it's the gathering momentum of millions of acts of kindness and decency that define our country and allow me to say that good stands squarely in the face of evil.

We're a good people. We're a strong people. We're a resolute people. And we're a people who will not be deterred in our desire to not only protect our homeland but to make the world more peaceful for generations to come.

It is an honor to be here with a great man, the Speaker of the House, and it is an honor to be the President of the greatest Nation on the face of the Earth. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:45 p.m. in Constitution Hall.

### **Remarks at a Shamrock Presentation Ceremony With Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland**

*March 13, 2002*

*Taoiseach*, thank you very much. Laura and I welcome you and Ms. Larkin here to the White House. I want to thank you for this fine gift to the people of the United States. I'm honored to accept it as a symbol of the strong and faithful friendship between our two nations.

Ireland has given many gifts to America throughout our history. This very house was designed by an Irish immigrant, based on your own Leinster House in Dublin, and has since been occupied by more than a dozen Presidents of Irish descent. One of them, President John Kennedy, said on a visit to Ireland, "When my great grandfather left here to become a copper in east Boston, he carried nothing with him except two things, a strong religious faith and a strong desire for liberty." The Kennedys were among millions of immigrants who came to America with that same faith and the same love of freedom.

As much as any other immigrant group, Irish-Americans have shaped this country for the better. They have fought in our wars, like the five Sullivan brothers who died together on one day on one ship in World War II. They helped settle our territories, like David Crockett. They helped build our cities and to this day still embody the spirit of public service. When the rollcall—when the roll was called of the policemen and firemen and emergency workers who died on September the 11th, it included many names like Donnelly and Duffy and Kelly and Sullivan.

Tens of millions of Americans trace their lineage to Ireland, and so many came here in times of grief for a country they left behind. Today, we are glad to see a strong and free and rising Ireland with so much to offer its people and the entire world. The ties of family and values are adding ties of diplomacy and trade, with commerce between our nations quadrupling in just the last 7 years.

September the 11th has reinforced these bonds of friendship. Ireland is a valued member of the international coalition against terrorism. Ireland has allowed American military planes to use its airports and has helped to rebuild Afghanistan. We appreciate your help in a just and vital cause.

America stands with you in another cause, bringing security and stability to the people of Northern Ireland. We've seen great progress since we gathered here a year ago. Many challenges lie ahead, but I am so optimistic that by working together we can meet these challenges and help create a lasting peace.

This morning we remember a good man who spread a gospel of peace. The greatest of Irish names, Saint Patrick, was brought to Ireland a slave and died there a saint. His courage and kindness helped to shape a great and noble culture. Americans are proud of our Irish influence, and we're grateful to our Irish friends.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:23 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Celia Larkin, who accompanied Prime Minister Ahern.