

And so that's what I've come to talk about. It's like setting realistic goals. It's understanding—it is telling this country how important public schools are to the future of our country and working with the public school system to make sure that we achieve a national objective. And that objective is to make sure that the United States of America remains the economic leader of the world, for the good of our people. And it recognizes that we have got to educate our children now for the skill sets necessary for tomorrow. And this is a better place—there's no better place to talk about that—and there is no better place to talk about that right here at Parkland Magnet Middle School for Aerospace Technology.

Thanks for letting us come by. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Resignation of H. James Towey as Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

April 18, 2006

Jim Towey is a dedicated public servant who has served as a vital member of my administration for more than 4 years. Under his leadership, the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives has applied the compassion of America to help solve some of our most challenging problems. His office has held 23 conferences around the country, assisting tens of thousands among America's armies of compassion. Eleven Federal departments and agencies now have Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives that are building upon and expanding their good works in neighborhoods across the country.

Throughout his life, Jim has worked for Democrats and Republicans as an advocate for those in need. He served as Mother Teresa's legal counsel for many years. His work on behalf of the poor and the sick has improved lives. I admire Jim for his compassion, his faith, and his sense of humor. He is a man of great integrity, and I thank him for his service. Laura and I wish Jim, Mary, and the Towey family all the best.

Proclamation 8002—National Park Week, 2006

April 18, 2006

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

In America's national parks, the magnificent beauty of our country and important examples of our Nation's cultural heritage are preserved and made available to Americans and visitors from all over the world. Each year, as we observe National Park Week, we underscore our commitment to conserve our natural and historical treasures and encourage more Americans to enjoy, learn from, and protect these important parts of our heritage.

Our Nation has a long legacy of conservation. In 1872, Yellowstone National Park became our country's first national park, and more than four decades later, the National Park Service was created. Today, the national park system includes almost 400 sites, with parks in nearly every state. From Yosemite National Park in California to Acadia National Park in Maine, and from Independence Hall to the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, America's national parks are home to some of our Nation's most beautiful landscapes and richest history.

This year's theme, "Connecting our Children to America's National Parks," reflects the National Park Service's commitment to encouraging young people to enjoy outdoor recreation and better appreciate our Nation's beauty and history. The National Park Service Junior Rangers program develops interest in our national parks by teaching children and their families about the importance of the national park sites. Young people can visit our national parks online by going to the Junior Rangers website at www.nps.gov/WebRangers. As Honorary Chair of the National Park Foundation, First Lady Laura Bush helps raise awareness about preservation of the parks and encourages support for programs like the Junior Rangers. Through initiatives like this, the National Park Service is promoting good stewardship of the environment and appreciation of our Nation's heritage.