

has narrowed since 2003. What all this means is, No Child Left Behind Act is working for all kinds of children in all kinds of schools in every part of the country.

And so we've got to build on the progress. And that means Congress needs to reauthorize and strengthen the No Child Left Behind Act. The act is working; Congress needs to reauthorize it and make it better. Through this law, our Nation has made an historic commitment to America's children, and we have a moral obligation to keep that commitment. We must ensure that they have the skills they need to succeed in life, and in a global economy, that becomes even more important.

As Congress considers reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act, I've offered several proposals to help strengthen it. And Secretary Spellings is going to be on Capitol Hill to explain why these proposals will make a good law even better. One, we can lift achievement—student achievement higher by giving local leaders more flexibility in the law as well as providing funding to turn around troubled schools. I believe student achievement will be enhanced when families with children stuck in low-performing schools have a opportunity to send their child to a better school.

We should increase access to tutoring programs for students who struggle and make sure these children get the special help they need. If you measure and you find a problem, it's time to provide tutoring for those children so they can get up to speed. That's what happens here in New York City. The mayor and the superintendent and the principal say, "When we find a problem, we're going to address that problem early." And it's working.

We should reward teachers who improve student achievement in low-income schools. When you find a good teacher willing to go into a school that needs help, that teacher ought to be given an additional incentive.

We should make sure our children are prepared for the jobs of the future by expanding access to Advanced Placement courses and strengthening math and science education. As yesterday's positive Report Card shows, children do learn when standards are high and results are measured.

And so my call to the Congress is, don't water down this good law. Don't go backwards when it comes to educational excellence. Don't roll back accountability. We've come too far to turn back. And so Congress needs to work with this administration to pass legislation that helps—gives our children the education they deserve.

I don't think there's anything more important than the education of young people. I know that's how the mayor feels, and I know that's how the superintendent feels, and I know that's how Laura and Margaret feel. There's nothing more American than ensuring that all our children have the chance to realize their fullest potential and their highest dreams. And the improvement in New York City's public schools reminds us of what we can achieve when we set big goals and work hard to meet them.

And so I'm proud to be here to congratulate the good folks of New York City. I want to thank all involved with making sure our children have the skills necessary to realize the great hope of America. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:29 a.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Joel I. Klein, chancellor, New York City Department of Education; and Louise Sedotto, principal, PS 076 The Bennington School. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Signing the College Cost Reduction and Access Act

September 27, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated—unless you don't have a chair. [*Laughter*] I welcome you to the White House. I have the honor of signing a bill that will help millions of low-income Americans earn a college degree. I'm really looking forward to signing this bill. I love the fact that this country is dedicated to helping people who want to realize a dream.

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act expands one of America's most important and successful education initiatives, the Federal Pell Grant Program. For the last 6 years, I've worked to make sure that we expand Pell

grants. I know the Members of Congress feel the same way. Pell grants give young people a chance to pursue their dreams. They give our fellow citizens the chance to build a better future.

The bill also takes important steps to put higher education within reach for more of the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. I want to thank the Congress for answering this call. I appreciate your hard work on this piece of legislation, and I'm looking forward to signing the bill.

I want to thank the Secretary of Education for her hard work. Margaret Spellings is dedicated to making sure every child can learn and every child can realize dreams. I want to thank you for establishing the bipartisan Commission for the Future of Higher Education. The Commission engages students and families and policymakers and business leaders in the academic community on ways to improve higher education and to make it more affordable and accessible. I appreciate you taking that on, Margaret.

I want to thank Congressman George Miller from California who has joined us. He happens to be the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee. When George puts his mind to getting something done, he can get it done. I'm about to call to—get him to—call him to get this No Child Left Behind Act reauthorized. *[Laughter]* But I don't want to mix messages early in the speech. *[Laughter]*

I thank Congressman Ric Keller from Florida and Congressman John Spratt, who is the chairman of the House Budget Committee. I'm honored you all joined us. Members of the Senate need to be thanked as well: Senator Ted Kennedy, Mike Enzi, Orrin Hatch, and Lamar Alexander. They were going to be here, but they got votes on the Senate floor, so they're here in spirit.

I want to thank the students who have joined us today. I appreciate you all being here. These are Pell grant recipients. We believe it's important to put a face behind what it means to get a Pell grant. In other words, every one of these folks up here is benefiting from the Pell grant, so he or she can realize their dreams. That's what America is all about, isn't it?

The other thing is, this is a practical approach to dealing with the fact that we're—live in an age in which technology is transforming the way we live and work. And in order for our citizens to be able to seize the opportunities of a new era, they're going to have to have skills that can be only learned through a post-secondary education. That's the realities of the world in which we live. According to 1 study, 80 percent of the fastest-growing jobs in America require some sort of education after high school. Times are changing. When we were—when the baby boomers like me were younger—it's a different era. We're living in a global economy. And we've got to stay competitive as we head into the 21st century, and the best way to stay competitive is to make sure people have access to good education.

And one of the best ways to make higher education affordable is through Pell grants. Pell grants make it possible for people from all walks of life to afford a college education. Pell grants send an important message to students in need: If you work hard and you stay in school and you make the right choices, the Federal Government is going to stand with you. That's what a Pell grant says.

With us today are a number of young Americans whose lives have been transformed—I'm going to mention two. Robert Garcia—I'm mentioning him because he's a remarkable story, but also, he happens to be from Texas. *[Laughter]* His family struggled financially. Robert's mom sacrificed mightily to get him a good education. By the way, that happens all across our country. Parents are sacrificing mightily to make sure their children can realize a dream. With her support—with his mom's support, he became a leader in his high school band, and he graduated fifth in his class.

A Pell grant made it possible for Robert to go to the University of Texas, where he has just begun his junior year. The lowest grade he's made so far in college is B. That sets him apart from the President. *[Laughter]* Robert wants to use his education to get involved in public policy, so he can help at-risk youth. Here's what Robert says: "The Pell grant has saved my life." That's got to make us feel good, to hear that. "The Pell grant has saved my life. They've provided me

with everything I need to survive: living expenses, tuition, books, and food. Without the Pell grant, I wouldn't be here."

Kalise Robinson—she grew up in Washington, DC. She was shuffled through the foster care system, and she was mistreated for much of her childhood. But she never lost her spirit. She was struggling to support her children, and she asked for help, and she found it from a community outreach group. They helped her find shelter, and she got a GED. In 2005, with the help of a Pell grant, Kalise entered the University of District of Columbia. She currently has a 3.3 grade point average, and when she graduates, she wants to help somebody else. Kalise says, "I came from a rough life. The Pell grant helped me. Wherever I go, I tell people there are options out there for you. If you work hard, there is help and money out there for you." We thank you both for being here. Thank you all for coming too.

And so today is a reaffirmation of our commitment, our determination to help more Americans realize dreams by getting a good education. The bill I sign today increases funding for Pell grants by \$11.4 billion over the next 5 years. It allows us to increase the maximum award from 5,400—to \$5,400 by 2012. And these are positive steps, and they're good steps. I wish we could make the Pell grant process last year round. I think that would be helpful. I want to work with the Members of Congress to see if we can't get that done. That recognizes the realities for Pell grant recipients.

The bill also helps ease the burden on men and women in uniform who have taken out loans for higher education. We believe that when you're wearing the uniform, we need to help you; that you're making a sacrifice, and it's okay for the Government to help you in dealing with your loans when it comes to higher education. And so those on active duty will now have new flexibility to defer payments on their loans.

These are important steps. This bill does, however, create new and duplicative programs that divert resources from the Pell

grants. This bill makes some spending commitments that aren't paid for yet, and I look forward to working with the Congress to ensure Pell grant increases that are not fully funded in this bill are paid for with offsets in other areas. And we're going to continue working with Congress to make sure the Pell grants stay strong.

I also do want to mention No Child Left Behind, if you don't mind, Mr. Chairman. [Laughter] Chairman Miller was one of the main reasons why this bill got off the House floor in the first place. He's one of the main leaders to make sure the bill got to my desk.

And the reason I bring it up is, in order to make sure we've got more children ready for college, the No Child Left Behind Act needs to be reauthorized and strengthened. Just this week, we saw what happens when you have high standards and you measure, measure for results. Those results were reported out through the Nation's Report Card. About 700,000 people were tested nationwide to determine whether or not standards are being met. Eighth graders achieved their highest scores ever in math, while fourth graders set records in both reading and math. African American and Hispanic students posted alltime highs in a number of categories. In other words, that achievement gap is beginning to close in America. It's something that we all want to see happen.

There is nothing more important than making sure our children get a good education. Today we've taken an important step in that direction. I'm hoping we can get the No Child Left Behind Act reauthorized and strengthened. I appreciate the Members being here today. I thank you for your hard work on this. I'm honored to sign this piece of legislation, the College Cost Reduction and Access Act.

Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:32 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. H.R. 2669, approved September 27, was assigned Public Law No. 110-84.

**Remarks Following a Meeting With
Secretary of Transportation Mary E.
Peters and Federal Aviation
Administration Acting Administrator
Robert A. Sturgell**
September 27, 2007

The President. Today I'm joined by Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters and the Acting Administrator of the FAA, Bobby Sturgell. I want to thank you all for coming.

We've been having a discussion about the fact that a lot of our air travelers are not only inconvenienced, they're—in some cases, they're just not being treated fairly. And there's a lot of anger amongst our citizens about the fact that, you know, they're just not being treated right.

And the Secretary and I have been talking about what to do about it, and I've instructed her to report back to me as quickly as possible on two matters: One, to make sure that consumers are treated fairly and complaints are listened to, and that we address some of the egregious behavior that our consumers have been subjected to. Endless hours sitting in an airplane on a runway, and there's no communication between the pilot and the airport, it's just not right. And so Mary is going to work very hard to make sure the system is much more responsive.

The other issue, of course, is dealing with congestion. And one of the reasons why our consumers on airlines, airline passengers are being so inconvenienced is because the skies are too crowded. And there's some short-term things we're going to do, and Mary is going to report back to me about what those will be.

Also, Congress needs to look at this FAA reauthorization—I call it modernization—and work with this Department and work with Bobby bringing our FAA into the 21st century, so that our consumers and passengers and citizens won't be inconvenienced the way they are.

Now, we've got a problem; we understand there's a problem; and we're going to address the problem. Madam Secretary, I appreciate your willingness to do so.

Secretary Peters. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Situation in Burma
September 27, 2007

The world is watching the people of Burma take to the streets to demand their freedom, and the American people stand in solidarity with these brave individuals. We feel admiration and compassion for the monks and peaceful protesters calling for democracy. Every civilized nation has a responsibility to stand up for people suffering under a brutal military regime like the one that has ruled Burma for too long. I call on all nations that have influence with the regime to join us in supporting the aspirations of the Burmese people and to tell the Burmese junta to cease using force on its own people, who are peacefully expressing their desire for change. By its own account, the junta has already killed at least nine nonviolent demonstrators, and many others have been injured and arrested as they seek to express their views peacefully. I urge the Burmese soldiers and police not to use force on their fellow citizens. I call on those who embrace the values of human rights and freedom to support the legitimate demands of the Burmese people.

**Executive Order 13445—
Strengthening Adult Education**
September 27, 2007

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. It is the policy of the United States to use existing Federal programs that serve adults, including new Americans, to strengthen literacy skills, improve opportunities for postsecondary education and employment, and facilitate participation in American life.

Sec. 2. Definitions. As used in this order: (a) "agency" means an executive agency as defined in section 105 of title 5, United States Code, other than the Government Accountability Office; and