

do better than that. And I'd like to ask the teachers to help me prepare the right lesson plan to ensure that we do.

Earlier this month, a House committee took in some ways an even more shocking step in our effort reward outstanding teachers all across America by actually eliminating funding for the important work of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which certifies the master teachers—something that one of our colleagues, Governor Jim Hunt from North Carolina, has devoted a major part of the last 10 years to working for.

By defining the standards of excellence in teaching, the National Board helps to focus and upgrade teacher training, recognize outstanding teachers, keep our best teachers in the classroom, and help them help other teachers. National Board certification helps our teachers test themselves against the toughest standards. I believe it would be a terrible mistake to end national support for the work of the board, and I'm going to work with Congress to make sure that this provision never reaches my desk.

Every school in America ought to have at least one board certified teacher who can inspire and help all his or her colleagues. Now is no time to walk away from our commitment to public education or to reject our common obligation to help our children—and to help you help our children. It's no time for Congress to set a poor example for students by ignoring the evidence, the lessons that are plainly there from all the educational research that has been done in the last 15 years, since the issuance of the Nation at Risk report; from all the anecdotal evidence they could pick up by talking to any one of you who have been honored by your fellow teachers and your States.

This should not be a partisan issue; it should not be an ideological issue. It ought to be, purely and simply, what can we do to help you do what is best for our children and their future.

The most encouraging thing I can say about looking at all of you is, while we go on and debate all this, you're going back to your classes, back to our kids, and because of you they're going to do just fine while we argue about often the wrong things. [*Laugh-*

ter] And I think that should be deeply encouraging to the American people.

Now, I close with these words, so that we can give our honoree the last word. The great Daniel Webster once said, "If we work upon marble, it will perish. If we work upon brass, time will efface it. If we rear temples, they will crumble into dust. But if we work upon immortal minds, we engrave on those tablets something that will brighten to all eternity."

Thank you, Philip Bigler, for brightening those minds to all eternity.

[*At this point, Mr. Bigler made brief remarks.*]

The President. I think we're supposed to say, class dismissed. Thank you. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:22 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Beth Blegen, 1996 National Teacher of the Year.

Proclamation 7087—Jewish Heritage Week, 1998

April 24, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America's first Jewish immigrants arrived on our shores from Europe more than 100 years before the American Revolution. In subsequent decades, millions more Jewish men and women would follow, fleeing persecution, pogroms, and the horrors of the Holocaust, seeking a new life of freedom and opportunity for themselves and their children. While many came here in poverty, they brought with them the riches of their ancient Jewish heritage: faith in God; a strong commitment to family and community; a tradition of service to others; and a deep love of learning and the arts.

Drawing on these many strengths, Jewish citizens have made extraordinary contributions to every aspect of American life. Acutely conscious of the dangers of racism, prejudice, and political oppression, American Jews have been strong and effective advocates in the cause of social justice. They have dedicated their energies, talents, and resources

to ensure that our Nation lives up to its promise of equality, making a lasting impact in the struggle for civil rights, labor reform, and women's equality. The Jewish philanthropic tradition, dating back to ancient times, has flourished in America, bringing hope and help to those in need through numerous Jewish charitable organizations and activities. In public service and education, in science and medicine, in entertainment, law, the arts, and many other fields of endeavor, Jewish men and women strengthen our national community and uphold the fundamental American ideals of faith, community, compassion, and responsibility.

Every spring, we set aside this special time to celebrate the many gifts that American Jews bring to our national life. This year, we also join with Jews around the world in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the modern state of Israel. This milestone is a tribute to the strength and resilience of the Jewish spirit in the face of great adversity. Israel's achievements in the past 5 decades of challenge and conflict continue to inspire all Americans and teach us anew the power of the human spirit to build reality out of our dreams.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 26 through May 3, 1998, as Jewish Heritage Week. I urge all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., April 28, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 29.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

April 18

In the afternoon, the President met with President Carlos Menem of Argentina at the Sheraton Hotel in Santiago, Chile. He then attended a working luncheon with Summit of the Americas leaders at the Camino Real Restaurant. Following the luncheon, the President attended summit sessions at the Sheraton Hotel.

In the evening, the President met with President Fernando Cardoso of Brazil. Later in the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton attended a dinner with summit leaders and their spouses at Canon's Courtyard at La Moneda Palace.

The President announced his intention to appoint Hannah Diggs Atkins, Luke R. Corbett, Donald F. Ferrell, Robert M. Johnson, Linda Petree Lambert, Gary Marras, and Richard E. Williams to the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma City National Memorial Trust.

April 19

In the morning, the President attended Summit of the Americas sessions at the Sheraton Hotel. In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

April 21

In an afternoon ceremony in the Oval Office, the President signed the Birth Defects Prevention Act of 1998.

The President announced his intention to nominate Henry L. Solano to serve as Solicitor at the Department of Labor.

April 22

In a morning ceremony in the Diplomatic Reception Room, the President presented the Harry M. Yount Ranger of the Year Award to Mike Anderson of Cape Hatteras National Seashore, NC. Following the ceremony, the President traveled to Harpers