

thousands of people who are willing to serve a concept greater than themselves in life. And there's no greater concept in life than to try to bring peace to neighborhoods. There's no greater concept than to take risk, like the men and women who wear the uniform do on a daily basis.

And so I'm here to thank you for your work. I'm here to tell you, this is a Government that stands by your side, a Government that understands that an educated child is going to make your job a lot easier, but a Government that also understands that as we rally the community- and faith-based programs—interface with people—it's going to make America a much more compassionate and decent and hopeful land.

Again, I'm so honored that you invited me here. Thank you for hearing me out, and may God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. in the Marriott Ballroom at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Ida L. Gillis, national president, Maurice Foster, executive director, Leonard G. Cooke, national vice president, and Hubert T. Bell, Jr., special assistant to the president, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives; and Charles H. Ramsey, chief of police, Washington, DC.

Videotape Remarks to the Boy Scouts of America National Jamboree

July 30, 2001

Hello, Boy Scouts, and thanks for this opportunity to send a word of greeting to your National Jamboree. Let me also thank General Colby Broadwater and the fine men and women of Fort A.P. Hill for hosting this event.

I'm so sorry the weather didn't allow me to join you in person, but I wanted to say a few words to the Scouts and Scoutmasters who have come to this jamboree from all across the country.

You know, next month I'll be going to my ranch in Crawford, where I'll work and take a little time off. I think it is so important for a President to spend some time away from Washington in the heartland of America. And whenever I go home to the heartland, I am reminded of the values that build

strong families, strong communities, and strong character, the values that make our people unique.

It is those values that are such an important part of Boy Scouts. And I want to thank the adults here who have shown good values, who have taken the responsibility upon yourself to build the wisdom and character of our young people. And the Scoutmasters of America accept this responsibility every day. I want to thank all the Scoutmasters who set a good example and help Scouts learn the values that give direction to their lives.

When you join a Scout troop and put on the Boy Scout uniform, you, too, make a statement. Like every uniform, yours is a symbol of commitment. It is a sign to all that you believe in high standards and that you are trying to live up to them every single day. As you do that, you bring credit to the Scout uniform and credit to your country. And I want you to know your country is proud of you.

Many of you have been to Washington this past week, maybe for the first time. You know, it's interesting, one of my predecessors, President Gerald Ford, saw Washington for the first time a few years after he became an Eagle Scout. Back then, in the thirties, Scouts helped collect food and clothing for people suffering from the Great Depression.

In our own time, you all have taken the lead in the fight against drug abuse. In Texas, Boy Scouts were among the first to take up a reading challenge that I set. All across America, Boy Scouts are doing good turns daily. And every time you do a good turn, this becomes a better country. There are needs in every community, and those needs can be met one heart, one soul at a time.

You can make a difference for America by the life you lead and the lives you serve. Times and challenges change, yet the values of Scouting will never change. Scouts of any era would recognize every word that you live by today, because those words have always defined Scouting. The goodness of a person and of the society he or she lives in often comes down to very simple things and words found in the Scout law. Every society depends on trust and loyalty, on courtesy and kindness, on bravery and reverence. These

are the values of Scouting and these are the values of America.

What you have learned in Scouting will see you through life. In good times and difficult ones, the Scout motto will always help you: "Be prepared." And whatever you do, the Scout oath will always guide you: On your honor, do your best.

I thank every Scout and Scoutmaster for being a part of this great organization and for being a part of this successful jamboree. May God bless you all, and may God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 2:30 p.m. in the Map Room for later transmission to the jamboree in Bowling Green, VA. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Receiving the Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform

July 31, 2001

Thank you, all. Please be seated. After the last election, two former Presidents and a panel of distinguished Americans—from both political parties, I might add—gathered to consider ways to improve America's election system. And they have produced an impressive report. Today I accept their report and recommend the key principles drawn from the report as guidelines for meaningful reform.

I want to welcome President Jimmy Carter back to the Rose Garden and to the Oval Office. President Gerald Ford could not be with us today, but he is well represented by House Minority Leader Bob Michel. Thank you for being here, Mr. Leader.

I want to thank Phil Zelikow for being the executive director of the Commission. I want to thank all the Commission members who are here, and I appreciate the Attorney General for being here, as well. Thanks for coming, John.

Our American democracy is really an inspiration to the world. Yet, the work of improving it is never finished. Presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford—two men who took part in another close election, I might add, and who went on to have a close friendship—

have come together to produce recommendations for modernizing the electoral system.

I want to thank the University of Virginia's Miller Center and the Century Foundation, as well. Mr. Carter and Mr. Ford recruited a Commission of 20 distinguished Americans from both parties and every region of the country. I respect the members so much that I appointed one of them to become the Ambassador to Japan, Howard Baker.

The others continued to take testimony. They held hearings in four States, listened to dozens of witnesses, and consulted widely with State and local officials. They identified some important concerns. For example, the overeagerness of the media to report the outcome of the elections. [*Laughter*]

Some voting methods have much higher error rates than others. And citizens with disabilities or limited proficiency in English can encounter obstacles to the exercise of their democratic rights.

The Commissioners brought a broad diversity of personal experience to bear. Seven Commissioners, in addition to President Ford and President Carter, have been elected to office, themselves, and have seen Americans' voting procedures up close and personal. Other members have had experience enforcing our Nation's civil rights and voting rights laws. Others are experts in constitutional law and the mechanics of government. This Commission's idealism is reinforced by deep practical experience.

The Commissioners offer many recommendations to strengthen our electoral system. Those recommendations are grounded in four fundamental principles, which I heartily endorse and recommend to the Congress.

First, our Nation must continue to respect the primary role of State, county, and local governments in elections. In 2000 more than 100 million Americans cast votes in more than 190,000 polling places under the supervision of 1.4 million pollworkers. Our Nation is vast and diverse, and our elections should not be run out of Washington, DC.

Second, the Federal Government can have a limited but responsible role in assisting States and localities to solve their problems