

**Remarks Announcing the Reopening  
of Ronald Reagan Washington  
National Airport in Arlington,  
Virginia**

*October 2, 2001*

**The President.** Thank you all. Governor, thank you very much. I am here to make an announcement that this Thursday, ticket counters and airplanes will fly out of Ronald Reagan Airport.

The ticket counters will be open for business. We will start a schedule of airplane flights that will reflect the new and tight security concerns that all Americans share. Ronald Reagan Airport is very important for our local economy, but it's also a national symbol, as the Governor mentioned. So Thursday flights will resume.

I want to thank all the captains and flight attendants and maintenance folks and ticket counter personnel, people who make this good airport run, for your patience and understanding.

We're doing the right thing. We've taken our time. We can assure the American public as best as we can, that we're taking the necessary safety precautions. Now it's time to start flying again.

I want to thank the Governor of Virginia for his hard work and concern about the working people in this part of the State. I want to thank Secretary Norm Mineta, the Transportation Secretary, for working hard to bring people together, to bring sensible policy to airports all across America. He's been working overtime. That's what we expect from the Secretary of Transportation during this period of time. And I'm proud of the work he's done.

I want to thank the Mayor of Washington, DC, for being here. The Mayor's a good, solid man. I want to thank Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton from Washington, DC, for being here, as well. Two United States Senators from the State of Virginia, John Warner and George Allen, have been deeply concerned about this airport. Members of the congressional delegation, Tom Davis, Jim Moran, and Frank Wolf, as well, have been working hard with us to come up with reasonable, sound policies to get the Reagan Airport started. I'm glad you all are here, as

well as Connie Morella from the neighboring State of Maryland.

There really is no greater symbol that America's back in business than the reopening of this airport. After all, this is the airport that brings our Nation's leaders to Washington to do the people's business. It's the airport that welcomes millions of tourists to our Nation's Capital. And of course, the Mayor would want me to say, we want the tourists coming back to see our great monuments.

But one of the things those of us who live in the area understand, this airport is really important for the local economy, as well. There's a lot of people, a lot of small-business people, a lot of people who service the airport, obviously a lot of people who work here, depend upon this airport being open. And I understand that. And I appreciate once again your patience and understanding, as our Nation obviously is dealing with a tragedy, the likes of which we never envisioned.

I also know full-well that the Nation is asking this question: Are we taking the necessary safety precautions as we open not only Ronald Reagan Airport but other airports? The answer is, you bet. We sure are. We're spending a lot of time consulting with local officials to make sure that the security that all of us expect is in place. Not only have we worked with Members of the Congress to develop what we hope is a security plan that will enhance confidence from the traveling public, but we work with local officials, as well, to make sure this airport has got the toughest security measures possible.

We also, as you well know, are increasing the number of air marshals, armed marshals on airplanes. They'll be undercover—let me rephrase that—they'll be wearing civilian clothes. [*Laughter*] They will blend in. But we'll have many more air marshals on flights. It should send two signals: One to the American public that there will be protection; and to somebody who thinks they can disrupt America, we're watching for you; we're paying attention to you.

Every person who gets on an airplane, who goes to work, who takes their family to visit relatives, is taking a stand against terrorism. You see, the terrorists, they want to intimidate America. The terrorists, by conducting

their evil deeds, wanted our Nation to stop. But they underestimated our spirit, didn't they?

**Audience member.** Yes, they did.

**The President.** Yes, they made a mistake. And the spirit is strong in America. Our confidence is strong.

We've put together a coalition of nations that says terrorism won't stand. We've got our military alert—on alert for a reason: Terrorism won't stand. We're cutting off their money, because we're saying terrorism won't stand.

And we're saying that at home, as well. People who travel say terrorism is not going to intimidate us. Tonight I've asked the Mayor to go out to dinner with me, on a Washington—here in the District. He said he's going so long as I pay. [*Laughter*] You've got a deal. [*Laughter*]

When people go to ball games, they're sending a signal. I mean, we got struck hard on September the 11th. All of us know that. But you can't strike the American spirit. It's strong. It's vibrant. It's united. And by opening this airport, we're making yet another statement to the terrorists: You can't win.

Thank you all for being here. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:52 a.m. at Terminal C, north pier of the airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. James S. Gilmore III of Virginia, and Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC.

### **Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Bipartisan Agreement on Fiscal Year 2002 Discretionary Appropriations Levels**

*October 2, 2001*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I support the bipartisan agreement to set FY 2002 discretionary appropriations levels at a total of \$686 billion. If the Congress presents appropriations bills to me that comply with this aggregate spending level, and are otherwise acceptable, I will sign them.

Within this total, I understand that defense activities will be funded at the amended budget level. In addition, I understand that an appropriations bill for education will in-

clude \$4 billion above my budget request and will be accommodated within the total discretionary level. I also understand that the agreement includes \$2.2 billion in contingent emergency appropriations, within the \$686 billion agreement. These emergency funds would be available only to the extent that they are necessary to fund unexpected costs that may arise as a consequence of urgent requirements beyond the program funding levels provided in the regular appropriations bills.

This agreement does not compromise my discretion to consider the policy and program content of legislation before agreeing to sign it. However, passage of appropriations measures within the agreed total will mean that there will be no disagreement between the Congress and my Administration over aggregate funding levels.

This agreement is the result of extensive discussions to produce an acceptable bipartisan solution to facilitate the orderly enactment of appropriations measures. This agreement and the aggregate spending level are the result of a strong bipartisan effort at this critical time for our Nation, and I expect that all parties will now proceed expeditiously and in full compliance with the agreement.

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Thomas A. Daschle, Senate majority leader; Trent Lott, Senate minority leader; and Robert C. Byrd, chairman, and Ted Stevens, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

### **Executive Order 13227—President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education**

*October 2, 2001*

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: