

Week Ending Friday, March 8, 2002

The President's Radio Address

March 2, 2002

Good morning. This coming week I will be highlighting measures to help America's public schools carry out the education reforms we enacted in Washington earlier this year. Our education reforms require accountability and results and give schools greater resources to achieve them.

Parents will have more information about the performance of their local schools and more say in how their children are educated. The No Child Left Behind Act is historic, ushering in a new era of accountability and education, but a lot of hard work is still ahead.

The effectiveness of all education reform eventually comes down to a good teacher in a classroom. And America's teachers are eager to put higher standards into action, and we must give them the tools to succeed. My administration has set a great goal for our public schools, a quality teacher in every classroom.

We can achieve this in two ways, by attracting capable men and women into the teaching profession, and providing teachers the training and support they deserve. Over the next decade, America will need more than 2 million new teachers. The budget I have signed into law for 2002 includes nearly \$3 billion for teacher training, recruiting, and hiring, an increase of more than 35 percent over the last year's budget.

We proposed to expand programs that recruit new math, science, and special education teachers by forgiving part of their college loans in exchange for a commitment to teach in poor neighborhoods for at least 5 years. We should open up the teaching profession, allowing people who have achieved in other fields, including veterans and parents with grown children, to share their learning and experience. And we must upgrade the teaching colleges, where many

teachers receive their training, the topic of a conference that will be hosted by our First Lady on Tuesday.

Today, only 36 percent of teachers, themselves, say they feel very well prepared for their jobs, so we'll focus on teacher training efforts where the need is greatest, in early childhood education, special education, math, science, and reading instruction. Through my administration's Reading First program, we are placing a new emphasis on the most basic of skills, and many of our teachers will need training in the best and proven methods of reading instruction.

Because learning only takes place in an atmosphere of order, we want our teachers to be in control of their classrooms. So we're protecting teachers from the threat of frivolous lawsuits that often result from enforcing reasonable discipline. Because committed teachers often buy school supplies for their students out of their own pockets, the budget I have proposed includes a tax deduction to cover some of those costs. And because I strongly believe in local control of education, I'll implement new flexibility for school districts. They'll be able to use Federal funds where the local need is greatest, to reduce class sizes or improve teacher training or to increase teacher pay.

In our new era of education reform we're asking a lot of our teachers, and we owe them something in return. We must treat them as the professionals they are. We must give them our respect and support. Teachers are among the most important people in our children's lives, and a good teacher can literally make a lifelong difference. I have confidence in the education reforms we enacted because I have confidence in the teachers who will carry them out.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:00 a.m. on February 28 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 2. The transcript was made available by the Office

of the Press Secretary on March 1 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Proclamation 7525—American Red Cross Month, 2002

March 2, 2002

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The American Red Cross is one of our Nation's oldest and most renowned charitable organizations. It provides help, hope, and healing when disasters or other crises strike countries, communities, or families around the world.

Founded in 1881 by Clara Barton, the American Red Cross was chartered by the Congress in 1905 to provide aid in times of need. Each year, the Red Cross responds to more than 67,000 disasters nationwide. These include natural disasters, thousands of home fires, and catastrophic emergencies—such as the brutal terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The Red Cross was among the first to respond to this unprecedented national crisis, providing direct assistance to more than 50,000 families, shelter for thousands of displaced persons, millions of meals for the hungry, and grief counseling for more than 200,000 individuals affected by the trauma. The Red Cross also provides assistance during international emergencies. Responding to my request, it helped create and now administers America's Fund for Afghan Children. American children were asked to donate one dollar to aid Afghani children, and this effort has already provided \$2.4 million in medicine and other supplies to Afghanistan. Last year, the Red Cross rushed immediate medical aid and other needed items to countries devastated by natural disasters, and it helped millions of people around the world to battle malnutrition and life-threatening diseases and gain access to safe drinking water.

Other Red Cross services include recruiting millions of people annually to donate blood and thereby provide hospitals with half of the Nation's supply of blood and blood

products. Red Cross personnel are now with our troops who are fighting terrorism in Afghanistan. They live alongside our soldiers in harsh conditions and work around the clock to fulfill an historic role. They help to keep service members and their families in touch with each other, and offer other small comforts to ease the strain of those who are serving the cause of freedom.

At home, the Red Cross' courses in life-saving skills, first aid, CPR, and water safety, provide Americans with information they need to help maintain safe and healthy lives. Our communities also benefit from Red Cross programs that provide hot meals and transportation for the homebound, as well as housing and job training for the homeless.

Over one million Red Cross volunteers help make our country stronger and more compassionate by relieving suffering and saving lives every year. The USA Freedom Corps initiative will provide the Red Cross with even more volunteers to help further its important mission. As we celebrate American Red Cross Month, I call on all our citizens to recommit to serving others in need. Collective acts of kindness and compassion point the way to a brighter future for our Nation and the world.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America and Honorary Chairman of the American Red Cross, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2002 as American Red Cross Month. Especially during this extraordinary time for our country, I encourage all Americans to support this organization's noble humanitarian mission.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-sixth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 5, 2002]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 4, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on March 6.