

their loved ones they love them; they said a prayer; they took the plane to the ground to save somebody else's life.

You see, it's that sense of serving something greater than yourself that we all can do—that we all can do—by showing compassion and decency and love. And as a result, we will show the world the true strength of America. We're going to keep the peace by being strong militarily and by doing our job, and we will win the war by being a compassionate, decent, honorable nation.

It is such an honor—such an honor—to be the President of such a grand country. Thanks for giving me the chance.

May God bless you all. May God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. at the Statehouse Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas.

Remarks in a Discussion on Welfare Reform in Little Rock, Arkansas

June 3, 2002

The President. Mike, thank you very much. I'm real fond of your Governor. I've known him for a long time. As he said, thankfully I took the hot dog out of my hand before I shook his hand. You were probably the guy yelling, "More pitching," though. [Laughter]

But it's great to be here with Mike in a State that—whose Governor works hard to find innovative ways to help people. And we're going to spend some time today talking about how best to help people go from welfare to independence and dignity. That's what we're really here to talk about.

Before I do though, I do want to say that I am working hard to secure the country. My vision is for a country that is not only more secure but also a country that is better. And so we're going to talk about the "better" part, how best to help people. I picked—the first way to start is to pick a good Cabinet. I've really done that. I'm surrounded by great people on not only the foreign policy side, on the national security side of my administration, but also on the domestic side.

Tommy Thompson was a Governor, a friend of Mike and mine, Governor of Wisconsin, and did a terrific job of heralding

education reforms and welfare reforms in his State. So I figured if a person could do a good job of helping people find work in Wisconsin, why not bring him to the Federal level? Not only is he successful as a Governor, but he also understands that Governors need flexibility and authority in order to meet the goals that we all want. And so Tommy is a person who trusts the people of Arkansas to figure out the best way to take care of the people of Arkansas. And he's doing a great job as the Secretary of Health and Human Services. So I appreciate you being here, Tommy.

I want to thank your two United States Senators for traveling with me today, Tim Hutchinson and Blanche Lincoln. I appreciate you all coming. Congressman Boozman is here as well. I want to thank him for being here. The Lieutenant Governor—there's the Lieutenant Governor; I'm glad that Governor Rockefeller is here. I want to thank the mayor for being here as well—and other elected officials. I appreciate you coming to hear this discussion, because it's an important discussion for Arkansas.

I want to thank Mark Evans. There's a lot of stories that I've already learned in one brief car ride about Pastor Evans. They're all good, by the way. [Laughter] Instead of building a house of worship, the first thing he's going to do is build a place to help people, a welfare-to-work training center. I thought that was—and in the meantime, I guess you'll have your services here.

Well, that's really important. See, I like to remind people that governments can pass out money. What government cannot do is put love in people's heart or hope in people's lives. And one of the things I feel most passionate about is how to capture this great strength of the country and help church and synagogue and mosque interface with people in need. The best welfare programs at many places are really found inside—inside houses of worship. And that's what's happening here. It's interesting, we're having this discussion on how to move people from welfare to work in a house of worship, and we're going to hear from three brave ladies here in a second about how this—this church, in this case, is helping—or two of the ladies—

helped them find dignity in their lives and hope for their families.

I want to talk a little while before we turn it over to the people that matter a heck of a lot more than me and Tommy—for that matter, Huckabee—[*laughter*—and that is the heroines of welfare reform. But first, the law that was passed in 1996 has been a great success. Senator Hutchinson, as a matter of fact, was on the conference committee that was a part of writing this law. It's been a huge success in America.

It's important for Americans to understand, when they hear the talk about welfare reform, that the '96 law has made a significant difference in millions of people's lives. As a matter of fact, Tommy's releasing a report today, and he can elaborate on that a little later, that details the successes of welfare reform: 5.4 million people fewer—fewer people in poverty in 2000 than in '96. A lot of it had to do with the Nation making a concerted effort to move people from welfare to work. And so when we talk about the reauthorization, which means we've got to extend it somehow in Congress, it's important for the Congress to recognize that this has been an incredibly successful piece of social policy.

Secondly, part of the reason why it's worked so well is because of work—that there is a work requirement. In order to make sure that we continue with good welfare law and good social policy, we should not weaken the work requirement in welfare. We ought to set high standards and aim for those standards. Anything that weakens the work requirement in a welfare reauthorization bill hurts the people we're trying to help. And it's important to remember that.

One of the interesting things—you'll hear people say, "Well, there needs to be more money." Of course, that's always an argument in Washington, and I'm aware of that argument. The budget that we submitted up there has got \$17 billion. It's the same level that has been in place in the past. But what's interesting is that the caseload has declined by 50 percent. That's part of the success of the '96 law. So if you've got the same money with half the number of cases, we doubled the amount of money available to all people. And that's important for the Congress and

the appropriators to understand, that if you keep the funding level the same and the caseload is half, you've got twice the amount of money to help.

Thirdly, that it's also important to say that part of the work requirement is, you've got to work 40 hours a week. In other words, work is work. We can play like it's not work, but that doesn't help people we're trying to help. The play-like world is the world that these ladies struggled to get out of. They wanted the real world of dignity and work and to be able to raise their families. And so when I asked Congress to say 40-hour workweek, we mean that.

Now, I recognize some people need extra help. There needs to be some extra education or some extra job training, and so part of the 40-hour workweek can go to job training. As a matter of fact, 16 hours of the 40, if need be, should be set aside for job training or education purposes. And that's in the bill I've submitted and passed the House of Representatives.

And finally, it's very important that we give States maximum flexibility. The problem with Washington is, oftentimes Washington thinks on behalf of people just because some in Washington think that the only place where smart people live is in Washington. That's not really the case. [*Laughter*] There's a couple smart ones up there, but not all the brains in America are in Washington, DC. Therefore, we ought to trust the local folks. We ought to trust the Governors more. As a former Governor—and Tommy's a former Governor—we understand that the more flexibility in the welfare law or the education law, for that matter, the more likely it is we're going to achieve important social goals and social objectives.

And so the bill I've submitted that passed the House is a bill that's got adequate funding. It's got the need to—it's got high standards, and that's what we want. If you lower the bar and lower the standards, you're not going to get the results you want in society. We believe that people can achieve.

And the final ingredient that needs to happen is, is that we need to get the Faith-Based Initiative out of the United States Senate, too. It's an initiative that recognizes that—that while on the one hand we don't want

the church being the state, or the state being the church, we shouldn't discriminate against programs that come out of faith-based institutions, all aimed at helping people help themselves.

Listen, some of the best drug treatment programs and alcohol treatment programs are programs that first help change a person's heart, so they can make better choices in their lives. And so I'm—I've come to this house to herald the programs, to call upon a good law, for starters, out of Congress—out of the Senate, so we can get it to the Senate and the House, and get it to my desk, and give these Governors time to plan to help people.

But I also come here because I recognize that some of the greatest social programs in the country come out of houses of worship of all faiths—of all faiths. And so Pastor Greg, I want to thank you for your leadership. I want to thank you for helping to live the adage—you want to love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. And I appreciate a man who not only preaches but a man who does.

Thanks for giving us a chance to be here.

[*The discussion began.*]

The President. You did great. Thank you very much. I appreciate you, Vivian. Probably would be helpful if some of the dads paid their child support, don't you think?

Participant. Yes.

The President. Pastor, you've done great. I appreciate it. Thanks.

Thank you, ladies, for sharing your stories. There's millions of stories like yours, single moms who struggle to get ahead. By the way, being a single mom is the toughest job in America. It's the toughest job.

And so long as there's pockets of hopelessness, this country must act—it must act. Anytime we find somebody who hurts, we've got to love them. I tell people, if you want to fight evil, the evil done to America, you do some good.

And the other interesting thing about what you all have done is, your example serves to help save somebody else's life. And I want to thank you for that and thank you for sharing with us and the country your great stories.

You did really well, very good job by all three of you.

I want Tommy to say a few words. Tommy is in charge of getting the law through the Senate, getting the differences between the House and the Senate reconciled and on my desk and then making sure it's implemented in the right spirit. But Tommy, do you mind saying a couple of things?

[*At this point, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson made brief remarks.*]

The President. Pastor, there's a couple of other things in the bill that might interest the people here. One of the things that we try to promote in the bill is family, and we set aside money for grant programs to States to encourage families to stay together. Now I recognize, not all families are going to stay together. But the more families we save, the more likely it is a child is going to have a good chance of making it here in the country.

And so there's a strong initiative in there to promote families, to help people who are about to get married to understand the consequences of marriage, and then to help people who are married who know they need to save their marriage, help them save that marriage. The family is an important part of the future. And that money, as far as I'm concerned, should be available for programs that work. We ought to be asking the question, what works, and get out of the process-oriented world that we sometimes find ourselves in Government. And I know that, Pastor Evans, you've got a family initiative in your church, and I want to thank you for that.

The other thing—the other part of the bill that obviously gets a lot of heat, but it's one that I think makes a lot of sense, is that we promote abstinence as well. We can argue the merits of it—whether or not it would be a part of the bill, but I tell you this: If you're interested in what works, it works 100 percent of the time. [*Laughter*]

So the bill is comprehensive in that sense, and it's all aimed at helping people—it's—that and this education reform. Listen, I want your kids to go to college, and I want your kids to get the best education possible. And we've passed a pretty good bill out of Washington. It really does empower the State of

Arkansas more than ever before. And it says, every child can learn. I mean, it starts with this premise, every child—it doesn't matter how your children are raised, what the mom does for a living—every child can learn.

It also sets high standards. And see, I'm the kind of fellow who believes in raising that bar. I believe in the best. I don't want mediocrity. I want excellence in everything we do. And so I'm confident that the bill that is being debated up there now, combined with the education bill, it's really going to make America a much more hopeful place for every single citizen, not just a few of us, not just a group of us, but every citizen. And that's really what we're aiming for.

NOTE: The discussion began at 1:05 p.m. at The Church at Rock Creek. In his remarks, the President referred to Gov. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas, who introduced the President; Lt. Gov. Win Rockefeller of Arkansas; Mark Evans, senior pastor, and Greg Kirksey, pastor, The Church at Rock Creek; and Mayor Jim Dailey of Little Rock. The discussion participants were Spring Davidson, Jeanette Cain, and Vivian Webb.

Exchange With Reporters at Fort Meade, Maryland

June 4, 2002

Intelligence Prior to September 11

The President. How are we doing?

Q. Not bad, sir. I wanted to ask you, yesterday you said in Little Rock that a better job could have been—a better job needs to be done to prevent terrorism. Does that mean, in hindsight—which, obviously, is 20/20—a better job could have been done?

The President. Well, I think there's no question that the FBI, for example, did not have as its primary mission a prevention of an attack, and now it does. In other words, the FBI was a fine law enforcement agency, chasing down white collar criminals and people that were committing crimes in America. And that's good, and that's still an important function of the FBI. But now the focus is on—the primary focus is on preventing a further attack. So the mission has changed, and that's a positive change.

In terms of whether or not the FBI and the CIA were communicating properly, I

think it is clear that they weren't, and that they—now we've addressed that issue. The CIA and the FBI are now in close communications; there's better sharing of intelligence. And one of the things that is essential to win this war is to have the best intelligence possible and, when we get the best intelligence, to be able to share it throughout our Government.

And as you've seen the reforms that both Director Tenet and Bob Mueller have put in place, a lot of those reforms had to do with how able—the two are able to talk to each other. And it's a very positive reform.

Q. If the reform had been put in place beforehand, if the FBI had been—

The President. Well, it's hard—it's hard—I haven't seen any evidence—

Q. —could the attacks have been stopped?

The President. I've seen no evidence to date that said this country could have prevented the attack.

Upcoming Visit by President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt

Q. Mr. President, President Mubarak told the New York Times this morning that he is proposing the idea of declaring a Palestinian state and then negotiating the hard things—borders—later. Does that make any sense to you?

The President. Well, I look forward to talking to President Mubarak. I'd rather—you know, I think it's probably wise for me to listen to what he has to say and not read it, you know, through the filter of a fine newspaper. So I'm going to look forward to my meetings with him at Camp David.

Egyptian Intelligence Prior to September 11

Q. He also—one of the things he said in that was that the Egyptian intelligence services had told the United States that they were expecting an Al Qaida attack a week before September 11th. Is there any—do you know of any reason to believe that?

The President. No, listen, there's all kinds of speculation. As I said, I have seen no evidence that would have led me to believe that we could have prevented the attacks. And