

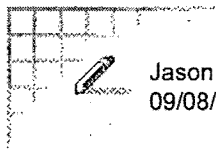


Bethany Little
09/08/99 02:05:18 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Andy Rotherham/OPD/EOP@EOP
cc:
Subject: Education Flexibility Act signing

----- Forwarded by Bethany Little/OPD/EOP on 09/08/99 02:05 PM -----



Jason H. Schechter
09/08/99 02:03:03 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bethany Little/OPD/EOP@EOP
cc:
Subject: Education Flexibility Act signing

----- Forwarded by Jason H. Schechter/WHO/EOP on 09/08/99 02:03 PM -----



SUNTUM_M@A1
04/29/99 03:41:00 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message
cc:
Subject: Education Flexibility Act signing

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 29, 1999

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT SIGNING OF

EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1999

Rose Garden

3:04 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Let me say, first of all, I thank Dr. Metts for being here, for giving us a firsthand and concrete expression of what this bill will mean to the states of our country and to the local school districts. I thank the members of Congress who have spoken -- Senator Wyden, Senator Frist, Congressman Roemer, my old colleague, Congressman Castle.

We're delighted to have the Vermont Education Commissioner here, Marc Hull, along with Senator Jeffords and Senator Kennedy, and a very large delegation of Republicans and Democrats from the United States Congress from the Senate and the House. I'd like to ask the members of Congress just to stand so the rest of you will see how many people here worked on this bill. (Applause.)

You know, there have been days in the last few years when I'm not sure we could have gotten this many members of Congress to agree that today is Thursday. (Laughter.) This was a truly astonishing effort, and I want to thank them all.

I want to say, too, a special word of appreciation to Governor Carper, and a very profound thanks to Secretary Riley. He and I started, as I have told many people, working on education reform 20 years ago this year. And over the last 20 years, we have done our best to sort out what we ought to do and how we ought to do it, and where the responsibility for what particular action ought to lie.

And I suppose, if I could put it into a sentence, I would say that insofar as possible, when it comes to the education of our children in kindergarten through 12th grade, the beginning of what should be done, should be done by the states. And "how" should be decided by the local districts, but, basically, whenever possible, by the local principals and teachers and parents involved in the schools. That the federal government is called upon to meet the needs that states can't meet on their own -- the needs of poor children, children with special needs -- or to fill in the gaps when there are crying national needs unmet; and that when substantial federal dollars are involved, it's okay for the federal government to say "what," too. But we should all be singing out of the same hymnal insofar as possible, and we should all remember that all education -- in the schools, at least -- occurs in the classrooms, in the libraries, on the schoolyards, among the students and parents and principals.

I think it is quite remarkable to see the places where you're really seeing a turnaround, now, where you have high expectation, high standards, discipline and genuine accountability for the students and the teachers and the principals. You also see a dramatic attempt to cut the cost of education where the money's being wasted, and to increase the

investment in education where more is needed.

One of the things I'm very proud of that Secretary Riley has done is -- independent of this bill we're signing today -- is to slash the paperwork burdens on state and local officials by well over 60 percent since he has been the Secretary of Education, while putting an even more ambitious agenda before the educators of America.

Now, the founding fathers understood that this would be a big debate; we'd always be having this debate. Thomas Jefferson once said, "Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we should soon want for bread." I may have liked that even more when I was governor, but it still sounds pretty good to me. (Laughter.)

But the framers understood something else, too -- they understood that the country had a right to decide and had to decide from time to time what we were going to do -- maybe not when and how, but what. They believed, for example, in 1787, that education was an important national purpose, and declared that all new territories must put aside land for public schools; thereby establishing the fact that education, though a state and local responsibility, must be a national priority.

This Education Flexibility Partnership Act exemplifies, I think, the founders' vision of how a properly balanced federal system of government can work -- providing freedom from federal rules and regulations. This new law will allow states and school districts not just to save administrative dollars, with less headache and red tape, but actually to pool different funds from different sources in the federal government. But by demanding accountability in return, it will make sure states and school districts focus on results.

Now, Doctor, you mentioned one example. I'll give you an example from my own life that made me so strongly for this bill. In 1990 or '91, when I was governor, the Department of Education under President Bush gave us permission in a very small, very poor rural school district to take all of our federal funds at elementary schools -- including the Chapter I funds and some of the special ed funds -- and put them together and take class size down to 15-to-1, in a district where the test scores were low and the learning was tough.

And this little district had a formula -- they also actually had an idea that even six-year-olds could be used to teach

other six-year-olds to read, and to do their alphabet and do basic writing.

And I should tell you that in this first grade class -- they had a rough means of testing the children in the first grade, to test their basic competencies -- and there were four children in these four first grade classes that had been held back for a second year. Everybody else was in the first grade for the first time.

And so we did this. Here's what happened. The four kids that were held back scored four times as high on their basic competencies as they did. All the Chapter I kids scored three times as high, and the overall classes did twice as well as the previous year's class.

It was a wonderful thing, except I couldn't do it everywhere in the state. And I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. See, here we had discovered something that is profoundly important. I got all the help that I think the federal government could give me at the time. And we did the best we could to take those lessons, in the absence of the federal funds, and apply them.

We want to produce results. We want our children to learn. We want all of our kids to be able to learn to the maximum of their ability, which means that they can learn at a world-class standard. And we need to give people who are on the ground, working with the kids and committed to that, the chance to do it. And if they're not, and the money's being misspent under this law, then we'll revert to another system.

But that is the meaning of this. This can change children's lives. And again I say, I am profoundly grateful to anyone who had anything to do with it.

I hope that -- now, we're getting off to a good start, and we'll keep on doing this. Last year, at the end of the year, we made our first big down payment on providing 100,000 more teachers, so we can have smaller class sizes. We're going to have to hire 2 million new teachers in America in the next few years, with a growing student population and increasing retirement among teachers. This is an important contribution to that effort.

I hope we can pass the bill to modernize or build 6,000 new schools, because we've got a lot of schools that are too old -- some of them even too old to take the computer hookups that have now been made everywhere in Delaware, as you heard the Doctor say.

I hope that we will reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to reflect the lessons learned in Chicago and elsewhere, and ask the schools that receive these federal funds to end the practice of social promotion, but to increase the efforts to help children through after-school and summer school programs and

mentoring programs; to turn around or shut down failing schools; and to ensure that we do more to see that our teachers know the subjects they're charged with teaching.

The greatness of this country has always been the promise of opportunity for everyone who is willing to work for it. Today you not only have to be willing to work for it, you have to know enough to achieve it. Therefore, there is no important responsibility that should have greater weight on our minds as Americans -- without regard to party, and without regard to whether we work in the national government or the state and local government, or the smallest rural school or the biggest inner-city school, or whether we're just taxpaying citizens, with or without children in those schools -- there is nothing more important for us to be focused on today than making sure that very early in the next century we can look at each other, straight in the eye, and say -- and believe and be right about saying -- that it is possible in America, in every community, to get a world-class education.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Now, I'd like to ask the members of Congress to come on up and we'll sign the bill.

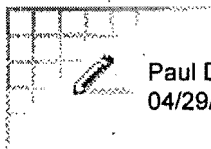
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3:20 P.M. EDT

Message Sent To: _____

POTUS Statement on Gates Scholarships
September 16, 1999

Today, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced a \$1 billion pledge to provide full college scholarships for minority students in the fields of education, math, science and engineering. I applaud the Foundation for its leadership and foresight. These landmark scholarships will help address important needs – the need to encourage young people to become teachers, the need to ensure that our children are well-prepared in math and science, and the need to open the doors of higher learning to all students. The Gates Millennium Scholarships remind us what a vital role philanthropies can play in American life – and how urgent it is for all of us to invest now in our nation's young people.



Paul D. Glastris
04/29/99 12:10:31 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Tanya E. Martin/OPD/EOP@EOP, Bethany Little/OPD/EOP@EOP, Jonathan H. Schnur/OPD/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: revised final ed flex

Revised Final 4/29/99 12:00 p.m.

Paul Glastris

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS AT SIGNING OF
THE EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT
ROSE GARDEN, THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, DC
April 29, 1999**

Acknowledgments: Sec. Riley; Delaware Ed. Sec. Dr. Iris Metts; Sen. Frist; Sen. Wyden; Rep Castle; Rep Roemer; Vermont Ed. Commissioner Marc Hull (Jeffords ally, retiring for health reasons, champion of student testing initiative that helps educators pinpoint schools that need the most attention. Has "completely turned around education in Vermont" says Gov. Dean).

The Founding Fathers understood that importance of allowing state and local governments to manage public institutions without overly-detailed rules from the federal government. As Thomas Jefferson once observed: "Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we soon should want for bread." Jefferson's observation used to make me smile when I was governor.

But the Framers also believed that the federal government must assume the critical role of setting national goals. That's why, in 1787, they declared that all new territories must put aside land for public schools, thereby establishing the principle that public education, though a state and local responsibility, must be a national priority.

The Education Flexibility Partnership Act exemplifies, I believe, the Founders' vision of how a properly balanced federal system of government can work to serve the interests and advance the welfare of ordinary Americans. By providing freedom from federal rules and regulations, this new law will allow states and school districts to use federal dollars more creatively, to reflect local needs and conditions. But by demanding accountability in return for these new freedoms, it will make sure states and school districts focus on results. In short, this new law provides opportunity, demands responsibility, and promises real gains in learning

for all of our children.

I think the Founders would also have been pleased with the bipartisan spirit that produced this law--a law I first called for back in March of last year when I met with the nation's governors at the White House. Now, I call on Congress to apply the same spirit of bipartisanship to the rest of my education agenda. Together we must finish the job we began last year, of hiring 100,000 new, highly-trained teachers to reduce class sizes in the early grades. For years, parents, teachers, and researchers have known that smaller classes make a difference in student achievement. Today, Senator Patti Murray and Secretary Riley joined in the announcement of a study in Tennessee that found promising signs of long-term benefits from smaller classes -- including higher graduation rates and better preparation for college.

We must also build or modernize 6000 schools nationwide. We must work to avoid violent tragedies like we saw last week in Littleton, by strengthening the Brady Law to keep guns out of the hands of children and by putting 2000 community police officers in our schools.

Finally, we must fundamentally change the way the federal government invests in our public schools--to support more of what works, and stop supporting what we know does not work. I will soon be sending Congress my Education Accountability Act. It will require states and school districts accepting federal money to do those things which governors, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students have shown are critical for raising student achievement--such as ending social promotion but also giving students all the help they need to meet higher standards; turning around or shutting down failing schools; and ensuring that teachers know the subjects they're teaching.

The greatness of America has always rested on its ability to provide opportunity for its people. And in the 21st Century, we know that education will increasingly be the key to opportunity, for the information age is the education age. If we take these steps, we can provide that opportunity to all our children. And that would make the Founding Fathers proudest of all.

Thank you and God Bless you.