

hookups, summer programs—to help our kids succeed. We have to have high standards not only for students but for the preparation of our teachers and for the performance of our schools. And I'll have more to say about that later.

Scarce dollars should not be spent on failed policies. If we've learned anything, Hillary and Dick Riley and I, after 20 years and more of working at this, listening to teachers and parents, going into schools, it is what Congressman Ford said: We do believe all children can learn. And that gives a much greater urgency to this work.

Look, this is not really just about making the American economy strong or even making sure that when we baby boomers retire we'll be supported by two workers that made B's or better instead of a 1.7. [Laughter] It makes a good point, but that's not really what this is about. Everybody just gets one chance. Everyone just has one life. This is about giving people a chance to make the most of that one life. This is about the sure knowledge we have that the rest of us will just be fine, everything is going to work out all right, if we give our children the chance to make the most of their lives.

I watched Harold Ford up here giving that speech, and I thought, there's a 28-year-old young guy with his whole life before him. And I knew that he had a family that told him he had to show up in the morning, that his work was school, that he was expected to learn. And I want that for every child.

You know, I go to a lot of schools. Today when I speak to children—I was out in Maryland or Virginia not long before last November, and I was talking to this group of kids, this wonderful group of kids. And they said, "You know, all the parents are going to come, and we just only wish we had time to translate your remarks into Spanish and into Arabic, because there are so many parents who can't understand you." That's the America of tomorrow.

In a global society where we're trying to get other people to put aside their hatreds, to lay down the burdens of the past, to embrace one another, to reach across the lines that divide them, that's a great resource. But the challenge of giving all of the children, from whatever backgrounds they come from, the chance to make the most of that one life is more formidable than ever. Because of these after-school programs, a million kids will have a better chance. That's really what this is all about, a million more stories like those two beautiful pictures that Lissette showed us today. And that's what we should always, always remember.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:28 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder, Special Olympics; and Lissette Martinez, parent-mentor coordinator, Frederick Funston Elementary School, Chicago, IL, and her husband, Leonard.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Comprehensive Plan for Responding to the Increase in Steel Imports

January 7, 1999

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

I am transmitting the attached *Report to Congress on a Comprehensive Plan for Responding to the Increase in Steel Imports* in response to the request from the Congress described in section 111 of the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105-277 of October 21, 1998).

As the global financial crisis has unfolded, it has touched the lives of many Americans. I am very concerned about the surge in low-priced steel imports into the United States and its im-

pact on our companies, workers, and communities. Our steel industry and workers have taken difficult and commendable steps over the past 2 decades to make America's steel industry a world class competitor.

Our goal in this comprehensive action plan is clear: we seek to ensure that competitive American steel companies and steel workers have the opportunity to compete fairly and that they not be asked to bear an unfair share of the burden of a global financial crisis they did