

Our schools will have higher expectations. We believe every child can learn. Our schools will have greater resources to help meet those goals. Parents will have more information about the schools and more say in how their children are educated. From this day forward, all students will have a better chance to learn, to excel, and to live out their dreams.

I want to thank the Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, for being here and for his leadership. I asked Rod to join my administration because I wanted somebody who understood what it meant to run a school district in Washington, DC. I didn't need somebody that based his knowledge on theory; I wanted somebody who based his knowledge on experience. And Rod was a teacher, a school board member, and the superintendent of the Houston Independent School District. He did a fine job there, and he's doing a fine job in Washington.

Reaching this moment has not been easy, as you could tell from Chairman Boehner's discussion. [Laughter] But we made it because of the willingness of four fine leaders to do what was right for America. We made it because proud Members of the House and the Senate, loyal to their parties, decided to set partisan politics aside and focus on what was right for America.

I want to thank George Miller. I call him Big George, *Jorge el Grande*. [Laughter] As John mentioned, George and I aren't from the same political ideology; except when I met with George in Austin, I could tell he shares the same passion I share for making sure that every child gets educated. And he, like me and others, realize that a system that simply shuffles children through the schools is a system that's going to leave people behind, and so we made up our minds right then and there to do something about it.

I appreciate so very much my friend Judd Gregg from the State of New Hampshire being here. He was my campaign manager in the New Hampshire primary.

I still invited him to come with me. [Laughter] After here, we're going to New Hampshire. I look forward to singing Judd's praises because he is a solid, solid United States Senator, honest, full of integrity, and like the others here, he buckled down to do what was right for the children.

And then, of course, there's Senator Edward Kennedy. And the folks at the Crawford coffee shop—[laughter]—would be somewhat shocked when I told them I actually like the fellow. [Laughter] He is a fabulous United States Senator. When he's against you, it's tough; when he's with you, it is a great experience.

And I'm signing this bill here because it's the home of the chairman, John Boehner. John did a really good job. He shepherded the process. He made sure people showed up for the meetings. He was dogged in his determination to get this bill done. It would not have happened without his leadership. And all four of these Members up here need to be proud of the legacy they have left behind. This is a good bill for the American children, and I'm proud to sign it in their presence.

There are other Members of the Congress who are here, as well, and I want to thank them for coming. Senator Evan Bayh from the State of Indiana is here. Evan, thank you for your leadership on education reform. Senator Mike DeWine of your State of Ohio, who helped author—who helped to author the safe and drug-free schools part of this bill, thank you for your leadership. Steve Chabot of Ohio, Van Hilleary of Tennessee, thank you both for coming, as well.

In that box is the bill. I don't intend to read it all. [Laughter] It's not exactly light reading. [Laughter] But if you were to read it all, you would find that it contains some very important principles that will help guide our public school system for the next decades.

First principle is accountability. Every school has a job to do, and that's to teach the basics and teach them well. If we want