

Senator Kennedy and I, on the way in here, were talking about the Latin School. And I want to thank the headmistress Kelley for having us here. Thank you very much. After he had finished the litany of all the Kennedys that had gone to school here—[laughter]—we talked about the quality of education that the kids receive here. And the truth of the matter is, if you look at this bill that I signed this morning in Ohio, it says this is the way—this is Boston Latin all over again. This is what Boston Latin is about. It's about expecting high standards, understanding every child can learn, demanding the best, insisting upon hard work, rewarding success, solving failure. It is a great school, and I am grateful that I could come and herald the signing of an important piece of legislation here at this school. This is not only a testimony to Senator Ted Kennedy's hard work; it's a testimony to a fine public school. Thank you for having us.

I appreciate the Governor coming, and I know the Governor is committed to quality education as well. Jane, thank you for being here. I'm honored that members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation came. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to come by and say hello. I appreciate so very much the mayor being here. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming; it's good to see you again. I want to thank all of you for coming. I particularly want to thank the students who are here.

I—you're seeing Government at its best with this piece of legislation. I know there's a lot of folks who look at Washington and say, "Can't they ever get along? All they do is argue. All they do is call each other names." But on this piece of legislation, on this important piece of legislation, we figured out how to put our parties aside and focus on what's right for the American children. We showed the country that, if we so desire, it is possible in Washington to say the Nation matters more than our political parties matter.

That was not as easy as it sounds. [Laughter] It took a lot of hard work, and it took the leadership of four fine Americans who are on this stage with me today. These four people decided they would rather see results than have empty rhetoric dominate the scene. These people said, "Look, we disagree on some issues, but why don't we figure out where we agree and get something done." And it was in that spirit that we crafted a great piece of legislation.

Big George Miller is out of California. He is—he might be considered left in Massachusetts. [Laughter] What do you think, Congressman? [Laughter] That's saying something. [Laughter] Before I went to Washington, I had a group of the gentlemen come down to Austin to talk about education reform, and George and I had a discussion about making sure that the systems did not simply shuffle children through, that we wanted to call a halt to what some call social promotion. I knew right then and there, when I heard his passion about focusing on each child, that there was a potential ally when it came to writing good legislation.

And then Boehner from Ohio showed up. He did a fabulous job, by the way. I signed the bill this morning in his district to really express my gratitude and the Nation's gratitude for his leadership on shepherding this bill through the House of Representatives. Without John Boehner, without George Miller, this bill never would have made it throughout the House, and I want to thank them both from the bottom of my heart.

And then there's the Kennedy-Gregg alliance. [Laughter] It was amazing that it worked, but it did. And the truth of the matter is, the bill wouldn't have gotten out of the Senate had not Senator Kennedy and Judd Gregg put their minds to it. This bill could have easily have stalled. It was a convenient time for people to say, "Well, we'd better not move anything out of the Senate because there's a war." But Ted