

Boston Latin School; Gov. Jane Swift of Massachusetts; and Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston. H.R. 1, the No Child Left Behind

Act of 2001, approved January 8, was assigned Public Law No. 107-110.

Remarks on Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 January 9, 2002

Thank you all so very much for that warm welcome. It's really great to be here with so many men and women who have made education your life's work.

Yesterday I had the high honor of signing H.R. 1, the No Child Left Behind Act, which begins a new and hopeful era for American education. We're bringing new resources and higher standards to struggling schools. We're placing greater emphasis on the basics of reading and math. And we're giving parents better information and more say in how their sons and daughters are educated.

Two decades ago, experts looked at public education and saw "A Nation At Risk." A nation described at risk is now a nation on the road to reform.

I am so proud of what our administration and Members of Congress from both political parties have achieved. We have shown what is possible in Washington, DC. We have shown that if you put the Nation's interests ahead of political party, you can achieve mighty, mighty reform.

The House and the Senate passed education legislation by overwhelming margins. I signed the legislation into law. And now much of the real work begins. Now we must turn our principles into progress and progress into excellence and excellence into the lives of hope and achievement.

I want to thank Secretary Rod Paige and all who work at the Department of Education. America is getting to know that I picked a good man to be the Secretary of Education. The guy is down to earth. He's got a lot of experience. He ran a huge school district in the State of Texas

and brought excellence, the standard of excellence, into classrooms in Houston, Texas.

I want to thank three of the four members of our merry band of travelers. [Laughter] Yesterday we went around parts of our country together. It was my honor to travel with Miller and Boehner and Kennedy and Judd Gregg. I figure Judd got tired of hearing us, so he peeled off. [Laughter]

But I want to repeat some of the things I said yesterday. First of all, I know the folks in Crawford, Texas, won't believe this, but Ted Kennedy is an able, good man. [Laughter] This bill would not have happened had he decided not to work to make it happen. He put his mind to it. I learned this: You want him on your side in a legislative battle.

I also want to thank George Miller from the State of California. George is a proud liberal, but also he's a proud author of this bill. He cares deeply about a system that quits on its kids—he wants to change it. I like him so much, I gave him a nickname, "Big George." [Laughter]

But I've enjoyed working with these two Democrats. They are a credit to their party but, more importantly, a credit to our country.

Yesterday I signed the bill in Chairman Boehner's district. [Applause] I knew Boehner had a big family; I didn't realize it was that big. [Laughter] I did so because John was a steady influence in the process; he kept the process moving forward, even in the face of 9/11. He said, "We've got to get a bill," and he worked hard to bring