

remarks, he referred to Gen. Robert Wilson, USA, acting commanding general, III Corps and Fort Hood, and his wife, Lynn; Gen. Larry Ellis, USA, commanding general, Army Forces Command, and his wife, Jean; Gen. Joe Peterson, USA, commanding general, 1st Cavalry Division; Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Gravens, USA, corps sergeant

major, III Corps and Fort Hood, and his wife, Deborah; Texas State Representatives Dianne White Delisi, Suzanna Hupp, and Sid Miller; Mayor Maureen J. Jouett of Killeen, TX; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## The President's Radio Address

*January 4, 2003*

Good morning. One year ago this month, our country set a bold new course in public education. With the No Child Left Behind Act, America began a promising era in our public schools, an era of local control, high standards, and accountability that will produce better results for America's students.

Under the new law, key choices about education spending will be made at the local level by parents and teachers and principals who know the children best. Government cannot and must not try to run the Nation's schools from Washington, DC.

Yet, the Federal Government has an important role. We are providing far more money than ever before to help States and local school districts, more than \$22 billion in this school year alone. Over the last 2 years, we have increased Federal spending by 40 percent, and in return, we are insisting that schools use that money wisely. States must set new and higher goals for every student, to ensure that students are learning the basics of reading and math. The law also requires that schools regularly test students, share the results with parents, and show how the results in each school compare with others.

My budget provides more than enough money for States to test every student, every year, in grades three-through-eight. Testing is the only way to know which stu-

dents are learning and which students need extra help so we can give them help before they fall further behind.

For parents with children in persistently failing schools, the law provides hopeful options. Those parents can choose to send their children to better public schools or receive funding to pay for after-school tutoring or other academic help. No parent will have to settle year after year for schools that do not teach and will not change. Instead of getting excuses, parents will now get choices.

Across America, States and school districts are working hard to implement these reforms. They are developing accountability plans and beginning innovative tutoring programs. The path to real reform and better results is not easy, but it is essential.

The priorities of last year's reforms will also be reflected in the budget I will submit to Congress this year. Too many students in lower income families fall behind early, resulting in a terrible gap in test scores between these students and their more fortunate peers. To help close this achievement gap, I will ask Congress to approve an additional \$1 billion, a total of 12.3 billion, for the Title I program in the 2004 budget. This would be the highest funding level ever for Title I, which serves our neediest students.

Our reforms will not be complete until every child in America has an equal chance