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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE  
NEBRASKA EDUCATIONAL SECRETARIES ASSOCIATION

THE LINCOLN HILTON

12:10 P.M. CDT

I do want to thank Mrs. Kinley and all of you from the Nebraska Educational Secretaries Association. It is real nice to have an opportunity to just say a very few words. I heard you were having your convention here, and I thought it would be nice to drop over and say hello. I know you are deeply concerned with the problems of education. You deal with them on a day-to-day basis, and therefore you might be interested in some of the thoughts that I have about education.

I have felt that basically the Federal Government was trying to require, trying to push on education in our State much too much paperwork and that the net result was there was much too much concern about filling out forms and not enough opportunity for students to get the benefits of funds that were made available by the Federal Government.

Nothing would make me happier if we could make our teachers and others like you associated with education focus in on the pupil and not on the paper. So, that is what we are seeking to do with what we have called block grant educational funds from the Federal Government instead of the 26 categorical grant programs that are well-intentioned -- I subscribe to them all, I think they are fundamentally aimed in the right direction -- but the net result is that in most cases the people in Maine and the people in California are treated identically.

The people in Florida are treated the same as the people in Minnesota and the educational problems in every State are quite different, and when you have inflexible and categorical grant programs, it does not give the educators and those associated with them at the local level the opportunity to make their own judgments, to use their own wisdom, their own experience, and what you want to do in Nebraska is what is right for education here, and we ought to give the same opportunities to those who are in education in South Carolina.

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So, what we are trying to do -- we recommended to the Congress, not only the elimination of categorical grant programs in transforming them into block grant programs so you make the decisions, but we added to the money that the Federal Government would make available so every State would be held harmless and some States would get more. But the main thrust was to make sure that you have the Federal money, as much as you had before -- and more in a number of cases -- and at the same time we could rely on your judgment to benefit the pupil, and that is what education is all about.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 12:14 P.M. CDT)