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An Open Letter to America's Educators
Regarding the 50th Anniversary of Veterans Day
October 15, 2003
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NOTE: As Americans begin to think about how to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Veterans Day next month, Secretary Paige is releasing this letter encouraging educators to use available resources to help students learn to appreciate the significance of our veterans. (This letter can be found also at <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2003/10/10152003.html>.)

Dear Educator:

On November 11, 2003, we as a nation give thanks and pay tribute to our 25 million living veterans -- men and women who have risked their lives, including many who are doing so right now, to protect our free way of life and to extend freedom to others.

Please take the opportunity on this 50th anniversary of the Veterans Day celebration to help students understand and appreciate the significance of this day for all of us.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and other federal agencies have provided resources to help. They include:

- > Patriotic Fact Sheet: Information about America's most beloved national customs, plus a list of possible school activities for Veterans Day.
- > Teachers Guide -- Honoring All Who Served: The guide includes a history of Veterans Day, suggested Veterans Day programs, information on how to fly the flag properly, statistics on America's wars and a message from President Bush.
- > Veterans History Project information: This project is collecting oral histories, letters, diaries and photos of America's war veterans and those who supported them. Students, citizens and organizations are invited to contribute using the project kit, which provides all information and forms needed to interview a veteran.

These and other resources are posted on the Department of Veterans Affairs Web site at www.va.gov/vetsday. Also, the Department of Veterans Affairs has mailed to every school principal a video featuring actress and entertainer Jennifer Love Hewitt. The video provides information about opportunities for students to get

involved with veterans in your community.

Veterans of World War I, World War II, the Korea and Vietnam conflicts, the Gulf War and Operation Iraqi Freedom contributed to the majesty of this country. I hope you will use these resources beyond this special day to honor our veterans and to help students learn about the sacrifices so many men and women have made in order for us to remain a free, self-governing people.

To our veterans I extend a heartfelt thank you for your service to our country.

Sincerely,

Rod Paige

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