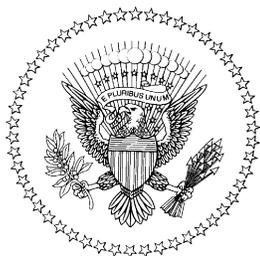


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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Editor's Note: The Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents is also available on the Internet on the *GPO Access* service at <http://www.gpo.gov/nara/nara003.html>.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, February 9, 2001

The President's Radio Address

February 3, 2001

Good morning. This coming week I will send to Congress my tax relief plan. It is broad and responsible. It will help our economy, and it is the right thing to do.

Today, many Americans are feeling squeezed. They work 40, 50, 60 hours a week and still have trouble paying the electric bill and the grocery bill at the same time. At the end of a long week, they collect their paycheck, and what the Federal Government takes is often unfair.

Picture a diner in one of our cities. At the table is a lawyer with two children. She earns \$250,000 a year. Carrying her coffee and toast is a waitress who has two children of her own. She earns \$25,000 a year. If both the lawyer and the waitress get a raise, it is the waitress who winds up paying a higher marginal tax rate. She will give back almost half of every extra dollar she earns to the Government.

Both of these women, the lawyer and the waitress, deserve a tax cut. Under my plan, both of these women and all Americans who pay taxes will get one. For the waitress, our plan will wipe out her income tax bill entirely.

My plan does some important things for America. It reduces taxes for everyone who pays taxes. It lowers the lowest income tax rate from 15 percent to 10 percent. It cuts the highest rate to 33 percent, because I believe no one should pay more than a third of their income to the Federal Government. The average family of four will get about \$1,600 of their own money returned back to them.

There's a lot of talk in Washington about paying down the national debt, and that's good, and that's important. And my budget will do that. But American families have debts to pay, as well. A tax cut now will stimulate our economy and create jobs.

The economic news these days is troubling—rising energy prices, layoffs, falling consumer confidence. This is not a time for Government to be taking more money than it needs away from the people who buy goods and create jobs.

My plan will keep all Social Security money in the Social Security System, where it belongs. We will eliminate the death tax, saving family farms and family-owned businesses. We'll reduce the maximum rate on small business income to 33 percent, so they can help create the jobs we need. Above all, my plan unlocks the door to the middle class for millions of hard-working Americans.

The country has prospered mightily over the past 20 years. But a lot of people feel as if they have been looking through the window at somebody else's party. It is time to fling those doors and windows open and invite everybody in. It is time to reward the work of people trying to enter the middle class and put some more money in their pockets at a time when they need it.

My tax reduction plan does all these things, and I hope you'll support it.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:30 a.m. on February 2 in the Oval Office at the White House, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 2 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks Announcing the Tax Cut Plan and an Exchange With Reporters

February 5, 2001

The President. Good morning. I want to thank the families for being my guests here at the White House. I'm honored to host the Peterson family, the Claytor family, and the Gordon family, to talk about the economic challenges they face. Their circumstances are

different, but I strongly believe they deserve to keep more of their own money, and so does every family in America, deserve to keep their own money.

And we're talking to these families here—I think they like the idea. Despite the prosperity of the past two decades, many American families feel squeezed. They sometimes carry a lot of consumer debt. In 1998 the average family credit card debt was more than \$4,000. At the same time, every American family is facing higher energy costs.

Under the plan I'll be sending to Congress later this week, every American who pays income taxes will get tax relief. And the average relief for a family of four with two children will be \$1,600. This is real and practical help, when at this time many Americans need it. Sixteen hundred dollars will pay the average mortgage for a month. Sixteen hundred dollars will pay for a year's tuition at a community college. Sixteen hundred dollars will pay the average gasoline costs for two cars for a year. And \$1,600 will buy the average California family 24 months' worth of electric power.

My plan addresses the struggles of American families and respects their judgment. It doesn't tell families how to spend their money. It doesn't single out some Americans for relief, while leaving others out. It's tax relief for everybody who pays taxes. That's what the times and basic fairness demand.

Here's how it will work. Under the existing law, Americans are grouped in five income tax brackets: 15 percent, 28 percent, 31 percent, 36 percent, and nearly 40 percent. My plan would reduce that to four lower brackets: 10 percent, 15 percent, 25 percent, and 33 percent. In other words, we'd begin the simplification of the code.

Each of the families with me today would benefit from these lower taxes. Most families will get a \$1,000-per-child tax credit. Everybody who pays income taxes will get some relief, but the biggest percentage cuts will go to the families who need it most.

The Peterson family, for example, will get a 100 percent cut in their income taxes, saving almost \$1,100 a year. Paul and Debbie and their two beautiful girls would appreciate that. All of the income tax rates should be cut. Most families over a lifetime will move

through a couple of different tax brackets. Many families will move through all four as they move up the ladder of economic success and then back down as they retire and leave the work force.

Our tax code should not punish success at any stage of life. The top Federal income tax rate at almost 40 percent, and the State income taxes on top of that, people can sometimes feel like the junior partner in their own lives. That's why we set the top rate at 33 percent. I believe it's an important principle that no American should pay more than a third of his or her income to the Federal Government in Federal taxes.

And Government shouldn't block the way into the middle class for hard-working people who are trying to get there. The single mother earning \$25,000 a year manages to earn \$1,000 by getting a promotion; the Federal Government takes about half of it away from her. That's a higher marginal tax rate than a lawyer earning \$250,000. That's not right, and that's wrong. And my plan addresses this inequity.

This is my approach: tax relief for everybody, in every bracket, averaging \$1,600 per family, while still reducing our national debt and funding important priorities.

I'm asking all Americans to examine this plan, and I'm asking for your support. The Constitution charges the Congress with the responsibility to write our tax laws. And I respect that responsibility. But it is my obligation to lead, and that's what I'm going to do. My plan is good for the long-term health of our economy. It is good for the businesses that create jobs. It is good for America and for the American families that make our country so unique and strong.

Thank you for coming.

Retroactive Tax Cut

Q. Mr. President, do you think the tax cut should be retroactive to the first of the year?

The President. A lot of Members of Congress have talked to me about that. And I do. And we look forward to working with Congress to expedite money into the pockets of the American people. I strongly believe that a tax relief plan is an important part of helping our country's economy recover. And

I think expediting money into peoples' pockets is going to be a key ingredient. I look forward to working with Congress, Members of both parties, to accommodate the budgetary needs and, at the same time, help get money into peoples' pockets quicker.

Tax Plan Structure

Q. Mr. President, Democrats in Congress think that this plan, as it's structured now, is weighted too heavily to the higher income brackets. Are you willing to work with them to perhaps change the ratios a little bit, if that's what it takes to get their support?

The President. I believe the plan, strongly believe the plan that I have submitted is structured the right way. I've heard all the talk about class warfare and this only benefiting the rich. I think when people take a good, hard look at the rate reduction and who benefits and the fact that our plan erases inequities in the tax code or eases inequities in the tax code and that the biggest—the bottom end of the economic ladder receives the biggest percentage cuts, people will come to realize it. I think it's important to cut all tax rates. Yes.

Enhancing Taxpayers' Cash Flow

Q. Mr. President, in addition to making the tax cut retroactive, your economic adviser said yesterday you would also support bringing more of the benefits forward to the first year of the plan. Is that correct?

The President. What I'm referring to is enhancing the cash flow of the taxpayer as quickly as possible, and that's what we're going to work on. I also saw some comments which I thought made a lot of sense, that some in Congress view this as an opportunity to load up the tax relief plan with their own vision of tax relief. I want the Members of Congress and the American people to hear loud and clear: This is the right size plan; it is the right approach; and I'm going to defend it mightily.

Top Tax Bracket

Q. There is no family, sir, representing the last tax bracket, the bracket that would get the highest dollar return. Why is that?

The President. Well, I beg your pardon, I'm representing—[laughter]—I got a little

pay raise coming to Washington from Austin. I'll be in the top bracket. [Laughter]

Former President Clinton

Q. Mr. President, on another note, sir? It appears the Clintons may have taken some gifts that were actually given to the White House. Do you feel that they should return any of these gifts?

The President. It's important for all the facts to be laid out on the table, and I'm confident that the President—the former President and First Lady will make the right decision.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:18 a.m. in the Diplomatic Room at the White House.

Remarks at the Swearing-In Ceremony for Donald Louis Evans as Secretary of Commerce

February 5, 2001

Thank you, Mr. Vice President. It's great to be here with Members of the Congress. Thank you all for coming. Senator, thank you, sir. Two members of the Texas delegation are here, and we appreciate it very much for coming.

I want to thank you all for giving the Vice President and me a chance to come and see the swearing in of a really good man, who married, by the way, a person with whom I went to first through seventh grade—[laughter]—with at Sam Houston Elementary School in Midland, Texas, and San Jacinto Junior High. And when we were on safety patrol—[laughter]—little did she ever imagine I'd be President. [Laughter]

I want to thank all the good folks who work in this Department. You don't know Don yet, but you're going to love him like I do. I also want to thank you for your service to the country. I appreciate your hard work on behalf of America and the American citizens.

Don has taken an oath to serve this country, and I know he'll be true to that oath in every way, because in 25 years, I have never known him to break his word or forget a promise. Don's the kind of man you can trust without reservation and turn to without

hesitation. He's a good man. I trust and admire him a great deal.

Since we first met in west Texas, I have turned to Don many times for help and advice. I've never been disappointed. We were together in Midland, Texas, when we set out in the oil business with big dreams for ourselves and our families. We were together in Austin, Texas, 7 years ago, when I began serving the people of Texas. He was there on our journey that led to the Presidency.

At every turn, Don has always been a wise and strong and steady influence. I thank him for taking this assignment. I am proud to call him my Secretary of Commerce. I'm honored to call him my friend. He has his work cut out for him. We came to Washington with a bold agenda. And we don't intend to waste any time.

Don shares with me a conviction that open trade is a powerful force for good in the world. In all our dealings abroad, we must stand for free markets and for the principles of democracy. We must stand for free and open trade, without favoritism and without barriers. We have set a great goal, a world that trades in freedom, and that goal will take all of our commitment.

Secretary Evans has a mission to represent to America's interests in the world. Many American industries and our farmers have met with unfair practices as they try to export their goods to foreign markets. In Don, they'll have an advocate who carries with him knowledge of trade, proven skill as a negotiator, and the full support of the President.

It helps, too, that the new Secretary of Commerce has a background in energy. Our Nation's economy depends on the fossil fuels that keep our engines running. And we must be less dependent on foreign suppliers. Along with my Secretary of Energy, Spence Abraham, Don will help me in pursuing a strategy of increased domestic production and energy independence. Don is a key part of my economic team. We're going to make the case for broad, fair, and responsible tax reductions. We're going to respect and reward the spirit of entrepreneurship in our country, helping small businesses as they expand and provide employment. We are going to make sure that American workers can find quality jobs in our American landscape.

I can't think of a better background for Commerce Secretary than a west Texan with a creed of hard work and independence and enterprise. Don has always represented those qualities for me; now he will represent those qualities for America.

Mr. Secretary.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:32 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary Evans.

Proclamation 7405—National Consumer Protection Week

February 5, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

More Americans than ever are realizing the American dream of homeownership. At the same time, an increasing number of homeowners are living the nightmare of overwhelming debt and home foreclosure resulting from fraudulent lending practices. Subprime lending—the extension of high-rate, high-fee loans to people considered to be high-risk borrowers—has grown substantially in recent years. Unfortunately, fraudulent and abusive lending practices have also grown.

High-cost lending is not limited to home mortgages. Check cashing outlets, payday loan companies, rent-to-own stores, subprime auto lenders, and pawn shops are additional examples of high-cost lenders.

While it is crucial that as many consumers as possible have access to credit, their access must not be hindered by unlawful lending practices. Federal law enforcement agencies have increased their enforcement activities to stop lenders who engage in fraudulent and abusive lending practices. In addition, Federal agencies and consumer groups have implemented aggressive education campaigns to help consumers learn how to safeguard the equity in their homes.

Consumers can protect themselves from loan fraud by taking some commonsense precautions, including comparison shopping

among several lenders, negotiating, and resisting, indeed refusing to yield to, pressure to sign any loan papers they don't understand. Nonprofit credit and housing counseling services are available to help consumers manage their credit and make decisions about loans and loan terms.

To help protect consumers, the Federal Trade Commission, the National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators, the U.S. Postal Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the National Association of Attorneys General, the Department of Justice, and private consumer organizations have joined forces to inform Americans about their rights as borrowers, about the responsibilities of lenders, and about protecting their assets. This information is available in writing, by telephone, and online.

I encourage all Americans to take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about how to protect themselves against fraudulent and abusive lending practices. By becoming wise and well-informed consumers, we can reduce the incidence of fraud and deception in the marketplace.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 5 through February 10, 2001, as National Consumer Protection Week. I call upon government officials, industry leaders, consumer advocates, the media, and the American people to participate in programs helping citizens to be responsible and wise consumers.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:47 a.m., February 7, 2001]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on February 8.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada and an Exchange With Reporters

February 5, 2001

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome the Prime Minister of our closest friend to the White House. This is the first visitor I have received since I've been the President. We've just had a very good visit. We talked about a lot of subjects, and I confirmed to the Prime Minister that America appreciates our friendship, appreciates our trading partner. We share a long border, and it's been a peaceful border.

I assured him that we will consult and keep him abreast of decisions that we make here that will affect Canada and peace in the world. And I look forward to not only reaffirming our friendship with the country; I look forward to developing a friendship with this good man right here. So it's an honor to welcome you here, sir.

Prime Minister Chretien. Thank you very much, Mr. President. For me, it's a great pleasure to be the first foreign leader to come and visit with you. But we feel it's a kind of a cousin coming to visit, because you know, we are two neighbors for so long, 4,000 miles of border, with no problems, big problems. Whenever they were our problems, we can talk, consult, and try to find an acceptable solution.

So I can tell the press that it was a very friendly meeting and a very productive meeting. We covered a lot of areas and look forward for a very good period with President Bush. On behalf of the Canadians, I want to wish you the best luck in your job. You're at the beginning, and I know that you will be successful. And when you need us, we'll be there, and we hope that when we need you, you will be there.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Prime Minister Chretien. Mr. President, if you will allow me in French, now, we had a very good meeting. This is the first time that I had a state visit—President Bush. We talked about many, many issues. We talked about our bilateral relations. We talked about other leaders and other people, and I think

that the beginning of our personal relationship is a very good one.

Canada-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, what issue do you think will be the one that will be the biggest test of the leadership in the next 6 months?

President Bush. For me as the President, in regards to Canada?

Q. Yes.

President Bush. Convincing Congress to promote free trade throughout our hemisphere. A free trading hemisphere is going to benefit Canada and will benefit the United States, and we've got a lot of work to do—for me to do—to get fast-track negotiating authority.

We're going to have a summit in Quebec, and I'm looking forward to being hosted by the Prime Minister, here, and the whole notion is to promote free trade and open markets around the hemisphere.

Mexico, Canada, and the U.S.

Q. Mr. President, there is an impression that you might prefer Mexico over Canada. Do you have a preference for either country?

President Bush. I've got a preference for friends. And the Canadians are longstanding friends of the United States. Mexico is an important country, as well, and I look forward to a meeting with President Fox in a couple of weeks. My preference is for friendly relations in our hemisphere.

I want the people of my country to understand that a foreign policy priority of my administration will be this hemisphere. And it's so important for the United States not to neglect the hemisphere. My first meeting is with the Prime Minister. Shortly thereafter, I'll be meeting with the President of Mexico. And we have great opportunities in this hemisphere to spread prosperity throughout. And it's going to be to our nations' mutual benefit when that happens.

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, what did you think of the Prime Minister's comments and those by the former Ambassador here last year that left the impression Canada might have felt

it would have been easier to work with Al Gore than with you?

President Bush. I didn't pay attention to it if he said that. I'm going to prove him wrong. But as for our discussions today, I didn't have any impression whatsoever that the Prime Minister came with any preconceived notion except one thing—that I will promote friendly relations with Canada.

Canada-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, considering your good relations that you had with President Clinton plus what you said in 1993 about relations with President Bush, first President Bush and then Prime Minister Mulroney, how do you expect your relations with President George W. Bush to be?

Prime Minister Chretien. Our relations will be very good. President Bush is the President of the United States. I'm the Prime Minister of Canada. We have common interests. We'll have different interests, and as we said before, it's very good to have these relations, and it's very good that Canada be seen as an independent country.

President Bush. Hold on. I've got a very important answer to give. The question was fishing. [Laughter] We talked about fishing, and I would hope someday to be able to go catch small-mouthed bass on the Prime Minister's—as he called it, the equivalent of Camp David. I could use a few techniques when it comes to fishing for small-mouthed bass. And one day, if all works out well, he can come down and catch large-mouthed bass on my ranch. [Laughter]

Q. Golf? Any plans to play golf together?

President Bush. If he gives me enough strokes. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:15 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vicente Fox of Mexico and former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada. After the Prime Minister's opening remarks, he spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on the
Operation of the Andean Trade
Preference Act**

February 5, 2001

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 203(f) of the Andean Trade Preference Act (APTA) of 1991, as amended (19 U.S.C. 3201 *et seq.*), I transmit herewith the third report to the Congress on the Operation of the Andean Trade Preference Act.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 5, 2001.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 6.

**Remarks at Tree Top Toys & Books
and an Exchange With Reporters in
McLean, Virginia**

February 6, 2001

The President. I am honored to be here, Carole. Thank you very much. Next time my mother shops, I am going to tell her to double the amount of purchases. [Laughter] I want to thank the other small-business owners who are here as well.

One of the unique things about America is the entrepreneurial spirit of our country. The small-business owner is really the backbone of the Nation in terms of job creation, in terms of hope, in terms of offering dreams for people. I am here to talk to these entrepreneurs about the benefits of the tax relief package, the benefits for the small-business owner.

First, we'll make the code simpler, consolidate the rates from five to four. By dropping the top rate from nearly 40 percent to 33 percent, we really say to the sole proprietor, the business owner, that there is more capital available for you to expand your business if need be, your own money in your own pocket to be able to make sure your small business flourishes.

I strongly believe and know that cuts in marginal rates will affect capital growth, which is so important for the growth of small

businesses in America. Secondly, the tax relief package will help the consumers, the customers of the small-business owner.

We have an issue in America right now called energy, and the energy prices are beginning to affect the purchasing patterns of the people who come to the shops such as this one. Many of the Americans have got a consumer debt load that is significant, and it is important for us to provide meaningful tax relief for all taxpayers so that they can better manage their own personal accounts.

There is a lot of talk about paying down debt. And my budget that I will submit to the Congress does pay down the national debt. But by cutting taxes on everybody who pays taxes, by recognizing a family of four earning \$50,000 a year will receive a \$2,000 tax cut, it helps people get out from underneath their own personal debt load. And that's important. It's important for the families; it's important for the small-business owners.

And finally, as Carole mentioned, part of our tax plan eliminates the death tax. Small-business owners work hard to have a financial platform from which they can not only live but also a financial platform that they can pass on to their heirs. And the death tax is unfair. The death tax is a tax that unfairly penalizes people who have worked hard to build up their own businesses.

So this tax relief package is not only good for taxpayers; it is also good to stimulate and to help the entrepreneurial spirit in America, a spirit seen right here with these good folks who have taken risk, are creating jobs, but most importantly, realized their dreams of owning their own business. So it's such an honor to be here. I appreciate your inviting us. Thank you all for your hospitality. I'll be glad to answer a few questions.

David.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Q. Mr. President, can you explain your position on a patients' bill of rights, as proposed today in the Senate? Are you for it, as it was outlined by Senators Kennedy and McCain and others?

The President. Well, I haven't seen all the details. But first, I am pleased that Senator

Kennedy and Senator McCain have come together to offer a plan. Inherent in their plan, as I understand, is some tort reform. That is a really important ingredient in order to move patients' bill of rights, as far as I'm concerned.

We can't have a patients' bill of rights that encourages and invites all kinds of lawsuits. Because the ultimate effect will be to run up the cost of business, particularly for small businesses. And so, as I understand, there is some tort reform language in there.

I'm a little concerned about the size of the cap on punitive damages. I want to make sure that if there is tort reform, it's a tight tort reform package, without a lot of loopholes that will allow trial lawyers to skirt the intent of the law. But as far as I am concerned, I am really pleased with the fact that they are moving legislation in the Senate. It is a good sign that Republicans and Democrats are getting together.

Q. May I just follow up on one point?

The President. Sure.

Q. The administration's meeting last night with Congressman Norwood—was that in any way an effort to stall this effort on a patients' bill of rights for now? Do you feel like anybody's trying to steal your thunder as you're trying to talk about tax cuts?

The President. No, I don't think so, David. I know the reason why our folks met with Charlie Norwood, like we're meeting with other people, is to lay out our principles, is to talk about an administrative initiative. And our initiative is going to encompass many of the principles that are inherent in John's and Senator Kennedy's—John McCain's and Senator Kennedy's bill. All these bills, they are going to get worked out over time.

I just want the people in the House and the Senate to know that I'm coming with a plan. And as you know—and you heard me in the campaign several times talk about the fact that our legislation in Texas, our patients' bill of rights in Texas, was a pretty strong piece of legislation. And one of the things I am concerned about is to make sure that the Federal Government law doesn't override what we did in our State.

There are a lot of details to be worked out. But I am really pleased with the

progress, and I am very hopeful that we can get a patients' bill of rights on my desk pretty soon. And the fact that, again, John McCain and Senator Kennedy and others have come together is a good sign.

Airline Strikes

Q. Are you worried about the possibility of strikes at four major airlines, sir, and what can you do about it?

The President. I am worried about strikes at airlines. I think that could have a harmful effect on our economy. And I would urge that the parties settle their disputes. The President has got some opportunities—if they are unable to do so—some opportunities available, and I will explore all options. But I am concerned about it and so should America.

Africa

Q. Mr. President, it's now clear that the continent of Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, is very important to you. Colin Powell mentioned that over the weekend. But what's unclear are the priorities in sub-Saharan Africa. We understand that there is a problem with AIDS, and they're a mineral-rich country. What are your priorities for Africa?

The President. You bet. Well, the priorities have got to be the same priorities we have for our own hemisphere, for example, or for around the world: Freedom, democracy, opportunity through open markets. And so the first place to start on the economic front is to make sure we have free and fair trade with the African continent. There ought to be significant trade back and forth, and we ought to explore opportunities to do so.

If there are barriers—and some are worried about the textile industry barriers for example—we need to examine them all, and I will instruct Robert Zoellick to do just that.

In terms of having a peaceful continent, it is very important for us to work with countries like Nigeria—to enable Nigeria to have an effective peacekeeping force, to keep warring parties apart on that continent. It's also important for us not to ignore Africa, so that we can anticipate problems before they occur. Oftentimes on that important continent things get out of hand, and they could

have been prevented in the first place, which means to have the Secretary of State and the National Security Adviser pay attention to Africa, which we will do.

Q. Are you possibly thinking of going back—going to Africa?

The President. Well, I'm—one country at a time. [*Laughter*] I'm going to Mexico first. I've got a lot of work to do at home. Gregory—David Gregory brought up a very important issue. It reminds me about how—it should remind you about how involved I'm going to be on pieces of legislation, whether it be patients' bill of rights or tax relief or education reform. I've got a lot of work to do here—to work with the Congress, to make sure that the principles that I think are important are inherent in these different pieces of legislation. I'll be making some trips, but I'm not exactly sure when I would be going to Africa, for example.

Tax Cut Legislation

Q. Mr. President, what is it you think you're going to need to do to get enough Democratic support for your tax cut plan?

The President. Say that again now?

Q. What are you going to have to do to ensure that you get enough Democratic support for your tax cut plan to make sure that it gets down to your desk for a signature?

The President. Well, I appreciate that. The thing I'm going to need to do is to remind Democrats, one, our budget works. That you can set aside payroll taxes for Social Security, set clear priorities, pay down debt, and there's room for the \$1.6 trillion tax cut. It started off at 1.3, and evidently it's grown to 1.6.

Secondly, to remind people in Congress that this tax relief package is fair and positively affects the lives of people who are standing up here by me. It is a positive effect on our economy.

Thirdly, remind them, we'd better act. The economy is slowing down, and we need to act and act as quickly as we possibly can, including working with Congress to make sure the tax cuts can take—as much of the tax cuts as possible can take immediate effect to help people.

Q. If I could follow up, do you favor doing something retroactively, or would you simply

accelerate the benefits in the first year of your plan?

The President. We'll work with Congress on that. The strategy, or the goal—let me put it to you that way—the goal is to get money in the pockets of the working people as quickly as we can.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:37 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Carole Segal, owner, Tree Top Toys & Books, Inc.

Videotaped Remarks in a Tribute to Former President Ronald Reagan

February 6, 2001

Laura and I have now spent 2 weeks in the house where you lived for 8 years. Everywhere we look, we find reminders of the great men and women who lived here and the achievements they left behind.

Your achievements, Mr. President, are clear to all Americans. They are found in the spirit of our Nation and the peace of the world.

You came here at a time when our country needed confidence. You told us we could be strong again, at home and abroad. And when you left, we were.

You came to the White House when the cold war was real. You told us, even when few believed it, that the evil empire would pass and that freedom would prevail. And your resolve made it happen.

In your time here, you never tried to seize credit, one of the traits we've always admired most about you. But tonight, on your 90th birthday, America knows where the credit belongs. America knows you came here 20 years ago and changed the world. America knows the good heart that always guided you, the unbending principles that always defined you, the kindness and courage and inner grace that makes you the man you are.

For all of that, your country thanks you, Mr. President. Your country honors you. And your country loves you.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 10:15 a.m. in Room 457 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building for later broadcast on CNN's "Larry King Live." A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Chemical Weapons Convention Inspections

February 5, 2001

Dear _____:

Attached is a report to the Congress on Chemical Weapons Convention inspections in the United States, submitted pursuant to section 309 of the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act of 1998.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Orrin G. Hatch, chairman, and Patrick Leahy, ranking member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Richard Shelby, chairman, and William Duhne, ranking member, Senate Committee on Intelligence; Henry J. Hyde, chairman, and Tom Lantos, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., chairman, and John Conyers, Jr., ranking member, House Committee on the Judiciary; Porter J. Goss, chairman, and Nancy Pelosi, ranking member, House Committee on Intelligence. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 7. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at the Tax Family Reunion and an Exchange With Reporters

February 7, 2001

The President. Well, Debora, thank you very much. I'm so honored to see you. And thank you for bringing your son and daughter here. The Vice President and I have been looking forward to this family reunion—tax family reunion. The nice thing about this reunion is you don't have any annoying relatives to deal with. [*Laughter*] But we're glad to welcome you to the White House.

One of the best parts of the campaign was to meet the hard-working Americans who really make up the backbone of our country. I'd go to the different cities around our great Nation and get off the airplane, and there'd be a tax family. And it was our way to put a face on a piece of important public policy. It was our way to say, behind all the numbers we were talking about, and to talk about

budget, there were real, live Americans who will benefit.

And I want to thank you all for coming back. I look forward for you to—look forward to thanking you in person. I look forward to you to see the people's house, the place that Laura and I are now fortunate to call home.

I have one message for all the folks that were our tax families and all the folks from around the country: You helped me make my case, and now I intend to make good on my promise. I want it to be said that ours is a plan that fulfills a campaign promise. And that's important. A lot of people look toward the political process and say, "Oh, these candidates just say something and really don't mean it." When I campaigned for meaningful tax relief, I meant it. And tomorrow I'll submit a plan based upon exactly what I said on the campaign trail. I look forward to working with Congress to get the plan passed.

During the course of the campaign, I said it's as if our Nation had erected a toll booth right in the middle of the road of the middle class, making it hard for people to access the middle class, making it hard for hard-working Americans to realize more money for their own. And so we're going to start dismantling that toll booth, brick by brick. It begins by simplifying the code. We'll reduce the rates from five to four.

It recognizes that our tax code is unfair. It is unfair to people who struggle to get ahead. It is unfair for the single mom who lives on the outskirts of poverty, who's working hard to provide for her family. For every additional dollar she makes above \$25,000, she pays a higher marginal rate on that dollar than someone who's wealthy. And that's not right, and it's not fair. It's not what America is all about, as far as I'm concerned. Our tax code makes the code more fair.

It is also fair that everybody who pays taxes should receive relief. And that's why we drop all rates. We drop the top rate, and we drop the bottom rate, and we expand the child credit from \$500 to \$1,000. Under our plan, a family of four making \$50,000 a year will receive a 50-percent cut in the taxes they pay to the Federal Government. The average tax load will decrease by \$2,000—from \$4,000 to \$2,000.

As Debora said, she calculated our plan, and she saves \$1,000. Maybe for some, the number 1,000 doesn't mean much, and maybe for some, 2,000 doesn't mean much. But for thousands of Americans it means a lot.

I want to assure my friends, the tax families who are here, that we will submit a budget as expected to the United States Congress, a budget that sets aside all the payroll taxes for Social Security, a budget that sets clear priorities, a budget that pays down the national debt, and a budget that has got room for a meaningful, substantial tax reduction.

And there's a lot of talk about debt in this town, and it should be talked about—national debt. And our plan pays down debt. But I also want the Members of Congress to understand that there are a lot of folks struggling to get ahead who have got high consumer debt. There's a lot of people who are burdened by credit card debt in America. And when you couple that debt overhang with high energy prices, more and more of the backbone of this country struggle to save and struggle to get ahead.

So this tax relief package not only is a way to make sure our economy remains strong; it's a package that understands people need to have more of their own money. It says that with strict budgeting and prioritizing our budget, that when we have surpluses, we must remember who pay the bills in America. And it's these folks who pay the bills in this country. And they deserve relief.

And so I call upon Congress, when they think about tax relief, to think about the members of our tax family who represent all the people of our country, who work hard to get into the middle class and to stay in the middle class.

It's an honor to be your President. I'm so thrilled you all are here to say hello to us. I can't wait to greet you inside.

Thanks for coming, and God bless you all.

Tax Cut Legislation

Q. Mr. President, Republican leaders are pushing for an even larger tax cut, sir. Do you think that's advisable?

The President. The tax cut is the right size. I believe it's the right size. And I think it's going to be very important for us and

the Members of Congress to work together. But I'm going to make my case that the size of the tax relief package I propose is right.

Q. So you're saying it would be inadvisable, in your judgment, based on looking at the numbers of the surpluses, et cetera?

The President. I think for those who want to diminish the size of the tax cut, that would be inadvisable, and for those who want to increase the size of the tax cut would be inadvisable. It's the right size.

Office of National AIDS Policy

Q. Could you tell us how it is, sir, that your Chief of Staff didn't know what your plans were for the Office of National AIDS Policy and the President's Initiative for One America?

The President. We're going to have a—we're concerned about AIDS inside our White House, make no mistake about it. And ours is an administration that will fight for fair, just law in the country.

Last question.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, how concerned are you about the outbreak of violence following the election of Ariel Sharon? And also, can you tell us how you might take a different approach than President Clinton and his administration when it comes to Middle East peacemaking?

The President. We're going to play the hand we've been dealt. And we're going to play it well, with one thing in mind, that we promote peace in the Middle East. And I've talked to leaders in the Middle East, urging calm, and so has the Secretary of State.

And I just got off the phone with Prime Minister Barak and told him he fought the valiant fight, and he assured me he would support the Government's attempts to bring calm in the region. And we will continue to reach out to the parties in that region to promote an environment of stability and calm, to give the Sharon government a chance to do what he said he was going to do, which was to try to form a unity government and reach out to the parties to promote peace in the region.

See you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:37 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Debora Meskauskas, single mother, who met the President during the Presidential campaign, and her children Bridget and Mark; and Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Prime Minister-elect Ariel Sharon of Israel.

Proclamation 7406—American Heart Month, 2001

February 7, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The year 2001 once seemed so distant that it became a symbol of science fiction. But today, researchers studying heart and other cardiovascular diseases have made 2001 a year when science rivals fiction.

Only 50 years ago, Americans were acknowledged to be suffering from an epidemic of heart disease. So little was known about the disease that it was thought part of the normal process of aging. Luck played a larger role in surviving a heart attack or hypertension than did medicine—and those who survived were forced to lead restricted lives.

But thanks to scientific advances and education, the death rate from coronary heart disease has fallen by nearly 60 percent since its peak in the mid-1960s. This startling improvement resulted not only from advances in the treatment of heart disease but also from gains in knowledge about its prevention. Scientists also have opened up new fields, including that of gene research. Their work promises to bring great improvements in the prevention and treatment of heart disease.

But problems remain. In particular, how can the rewards of scientific advances be brought to all Americans? Racial, ethnic, and geographic gaps still exist in the burden of disease. The number one killer of women is cardiovascular disease.

Another challenge is the increase in certain conditions and heart disease risk factors. Obesity and physical inactivity pose still other problems. More than half of American adults are overweight and obese, about one in four

are sedentary, and another third are not active enough to reach a healthy level of fitness.

Meeting such challenges takes both will and technology. For example, researchers recently found that small changes in lifestyle that boost moderate-level physical activity can protect cardiorespiratory fitness and blood pressure as much as a structured exercise program. These are changes that all Americans can adopt.

Sudden death from cardiac arrest has also been a major health threat. Yet fortunately, more Americans are learning the warning signs of cardiac arrest. Calling 9–1–1 immediately and administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) until an electric shock to the heart can be given to restore a normal heartbeat—a practice known as defibrillation—combined with early advanced care can result in long-term survival rates as high as 40 percent for certain types of cardiac arrest.

The Federal Government seeks to improve Americans' heart health by supporting research and public education through its National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health. The American Heart Association, through its research and education programs and its vital network of dedicated volunteers, also plays a crucial role in bringing about much-needed advances.

Americans have always believed in the power of science to improve lives, and it is their support and the use of scientific advances that has reduced the epidemic of heart disease. It will be through continued scientific efforts that we find even more answers and reduce the rate of heart disease even further.

In recognition of the importance of the ongoing fight against cardiovascular disease, the Congress, by Joint Resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 843; 36 U.S.C 101) has requested that the President issue an annual proclamation designating February as "American Heart Month."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of February 2001 as American Heart Month. I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of other areas subject

to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to combating cardiovascular disease.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:50 a.m., February 8, 2001]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on February 9.

Proclamation 7407—National Burn Awareness Week, 2001

February 7, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Burn injuries are a serious problem in the United States. Each year, over 3,000 people die and 16,000 are injured by fires that start in the home. These fires cost the Nation over \$18 billion. Tragically, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities are those most likely to become victims of serious burns. Children are particularly vulnerable. Each year, about 800 children under the age of 15 die of fire-related causes and about 500 of these deaths are to children under the age of 5 years. In fact, children under age 5 have a death rate from fire more than twice the national average.

All Americans can make their homes safer by making sure they have a working smoke alarm. About 90 percent of U.S. households have smoke alarms. However, a recent survey found that smoke alarms in 20 percent of those households—about 16 million—were not working, mostly because the battery was dead or missing. Those families who have not yet done so should place a smoke alarm inside each sleeping room and on each level of a multi-story home and make sure the alarms are tested monthly and the batteries are replaced when necessary.

We should also learn what to do in the event of fire, including the “stop, drop, and roll” maneuver that can help prevent serious burn injuries. Those families that have not yet done so should make plans for escaping a house fire—and every American family should review and practice the plan regularly.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) helps to keep children and families safe from products that pose fire dangers. CPSC activities have contributed to a decline in fires and fire deaths over the past several years. For example, CPSC’s standard for child-resistant lighters has helped reduce fire deaths from children playing with lighters by 43 percent since 1994.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim February 4 through February 10, 2001, as National Burn Awareness Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week by participating in appropriate ceremonies and activities and by learning how to prevent burn injuries, especially to children.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:50 a.m., February 8, 2001]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on February 9.

Letter to Congressional Majority Leaders on the Patients’ Bill of Rights

February 7, 2001

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

I was grateful for the opportunity to meet with you last month at the White House to discuss our shared goal of passing a strong Patients’ Bill of Rights. Over the last two weeks my staff and I have met with Members of Congress from both parties, and I believe that we have an opportunity to work together

to enact legislation this year to address this important issue. I am writing to ask for your support, and for the support of all Members of Congress, for a bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights to provide all Americans with protections in managed care.

As Governor of Texas, I worked with Democrats and Republicans to enact some of the strongest patient protection laws in this country. My goal now in seeking Federal legislation is simple: I want to ensure that all patients receive needed medical care and that doctors are allowed to make medical decisions.

To achieve these goals, patients should have the right to an independent medical review of a health plan's decision to deny care. This review should be conducted by medical experts outside the health plan and must be binding on the health plan. I also believe that, following an independent medical review of a health plan's decision to deny care, patients who have been wrongly denied medical care should be allowed to hold their health plans liable in Federal court.

I cannot support a plan, however, that encourages unnecessary or frivolous litigation. Expensive litigation, and the resulting rise in health care costs, would only make it more difficult for Americans to afford health care coverage in the first place. I believe it is possible to provide patients a meaningful remedy when they have been wrongly denied care, without causing other Americans to lose coverage. A responsible remedy for patients should protect employers from the high costs of being subject to multiple causes of action in multiple venues and should provide a reasonable cap on damages.

As you requested, I have enclosed the principles by which I will gauge any piece of Federal legislation. I do not believe that any bill currently before the Congress meets all of these principles. However, I applaud the efforts of Members on both sides of the aisle who have stepped forward to address this issue. I believe we can work together to reach bipartisan agreement this year on a strong Patients' Bill of Rights that protects all Americans, does not override the patient protections already adopted by states, and avoids costly litigation.

I look forward to working with you and all Members of Congress to enact these principles into law as soon as possible. I also look forward to working with you to provide access to health care for the millions of Americans without health insurance.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Trent Lott, Senate majority leader.

Letter to Congressional Minority Leaders on the Patients' Bill of Rights

February 7, 2001

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Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader, and Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader.

Remarks on Transmitting Proposed Tax Cut Plan to the Congress

February 8, 2001

Thank you very much for that warm welcome. It's good to see so many friends here in the Rose Garden. This is our first event in this beautiful spot, and it's appropriate we talk about policy that will affect people's lives in a positive way in such a beautiful, beautiful part of our national—really, our national park system, I guess is, as you would want to call it.

This is the land of economic miracles, and we are experiencing one here in our country. Latino businesses are growing faster than the Government can count. Back in 1997 there were 1.4 million Latino-owned businesses. Since then, the number has been growing by an estimated 25 percent. No one is entirely sure of the total. Your success has left all statistics behind, and America is better off for it.

The businesses you have built prove the continuing power of the American ideal, a promise of advancement to men and women of every background. This country appreciates you. We appreciate your vision, your hard work. And I congratulate you for your success.

To succeed, Latino-owned businesses need the same things all businesses need: moderate regulation, a sensible legal system, and a growing economy. For several months, however, our economic growth has been in doubt. And now, it may be in danger.

Americans are hearing, and some feeling, the economic slowdown. Americans hear about the news—many are beginning to actually feel what it means to be in an economic slowdown. Consumer confidence has slumped. Many business leaders are worried. A warning light is flashing on the dashboard of our economy. And we just can't drive on and hope for the best. We must act without delay.

My job is to lead. A President should not wait on events. He must try to shape them. And the warning signs are clear. All of us here in Washington, the President and the Congress, are responsible to confront the danger of an economic slowdown and to blunt its effects.

Today I am sending to Congress my plan to provide relief to all income taxpayers, which I believe will help jump-start the American economy. We must give overcharged taxpayers some of their own money back. We must give low income families fairer treatment. We must give small businesses a better chance to grow and to hire. For all these reasons, I urge Congress to help me strengthen our economy by lightening the tax load, the tax burden on the American people.

Here's how my tax relief plan will work. We will simplify our tax code, reducing today's five brackets to four lower ones: 10 percent, 15 percent, 25 percent, and 33 percent. Families with children will also receive a tax credit of \$1,000 per child. We will end the death tax, reduce the marriage penalty, and expand tax incentives for charitable giving.

My plan is directed toward individuals and small businesses. It offers relief for everyone who pays income taxes, and it keeps our national commitments to Social Security and debt reduction. These are the details. But it is the results that will matter most.

If we pass this tax relief plan in a timely manner, three important things will happen: First, we will return \$1,600 to the typical American family with two children. Working families earning between \$35,000 and \$75,000 will keep anywhere from \$600 to \$3,000 more each year. With this tax relief, families can save or pay off debt or pay for higher energy bills. This \$1,600 is good for a family. Multiplied by millions of families, it is good for our Nation's economy. It means greater demand for your goods and your services at a time when demand may be slowing. I'm committed to accelerating economic growth. Lower interest rates will certainly help, but they need to be reinforced with tax relief as well.

There is talk in Congress of bringing this relief even quicker by making it retroactive to the beginning of this year. I strongly support that idea. We need tax relief now. In fact, we need tax relief yesterday. And I will work with Congress to provide it.

Our economy faces this challenge: Investors and consumers have too little money, and the U.S. Treasury is holding too much. The Federal Government is simply pulling too much money out of the private economy, and this is a drag on our growth.

Over the past 6 years, the Federal share of our GDP has risen from 18 percent to 21 percent, about as much as our Government took during World War II. President John Kennedy faced a similar situation in the 1960's. He warned then against storing up dollars in Washington by taking away more than the Government needed to pay its necessary expenses. "High tax rates," he said, and I quote, "are no longer necessary. They

are, in fact, harmful. These high tax rates do not leave enough money in private hands to keep this country's economy growing and healthy."

Forty years later our Treasury is full, and our people are overcharged. Returning some of their money is right, and it is urgent.

The second effect of my plan is to substantially reduce the taxpayers that bar too many Americans from the middle class. Our new 10-percent rate, along with the child credit, will cut Federal marginal tax rates by 40 percent on many struggling taxpayers.

I've talked about this problem for over a year, and I'll talk about it until we fix it. Under current law, say a waitress is working hard to get ahead, and she may have two children, earning \$25,000 a year faces a higher marginal tax rate than a successful lawyer earning 10 times as much. That is not right, and that is not fair. The Government would take from her nearly one-half of every extra dollar she earns. Her hardest hours are taxed at the highest rates.

Today, tax codes are sending—our tax code sends this message to this woman: Stay where you are; you'll never get ahead. But that is not the message of America, as far as I'm concerned. And it must not be the message of our tax code. Our tax system must reward the dreams of a better life.

My plan dramatically reduces the marginal rate on many low income earners, rewarding overtime or a hard-won raise, encouraging Americans on their path to the middle class. Six million families, one out of every five families with children, will no longer pay Federal income taxes at all under our plan.

This country has prospered mightily over the last 20 years. But a lot of folks feel as if they've been looking at somebody else's party, that they've been looking from the outside. It's time to open the door and welcome everyone in.

And finally, this tax relief plan will be good not just for the short-term needs of our country and for our economy but for the long-term health of our Nation. Every big business began as a small business. Many of the great companies of our time were founded when the maximum tax rate on small businesses was only 28 percent. Today, many small businesses are paying a tax rate as high as 40

percent. Thousands of sole proprietors, people with dreams, pay high, high rates. That's not how one encourages innovation or job creation or expansion.

My tax relief plan reduces the marginal rates that many small businesses pay. We want you to have a fighting chance in a difficult economy. We also want people to have more funds to reinvest and to grow their businesses. We want to make sure that the next generation of success stories continues far into the future. I hope all of you will help me in this task. We have minds to change, and we've got some laws to pass. Our course is set, and I believe our case is strong.

This week I've been meeting with Americans of all backgrounds—young families, leaders of large companies, entrepreneurs, single moms. All are worried about the direction of our economy. All are agreed that action is needed. And today I'm acting, for your sake.

I urge the Congress to pass my tax relief plan with the swiftness these uncertain times demand. I will now sign a letter of transmittal and soon hope I'll be signing the needed tax relief.

Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Tax Cut Plan

February 8, 2001

To the Congress of the United States:

Enclosed please find my plan to provide needed tax relief to the American people. Over the last several months, the economy has slowed dramatically. I believe that the best way to ensure that our prosperity continues is to put more money in the hands of consumers and entrepreneurs as soon as possible. I look forward to working with the Congress to enact meaningful tax cuts into law.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 8, 2001.

Remarks at the Swearing-In Ceremony for Norman Y. Mineta as Secretary of Transportation

February 8, 2001

Good afternoon to you all. Thank you all for coming. Norm, welcome back to the White House. Usually at events like this, a new Secretary is joining the Cabinet. This time a new Cabinet is joining the Secretary.

I'm pleased that you're back. I'm glad that your wife is with us. I'm going to welcome your family members to the Oval Office. Thank you all for coming.

For 21 years, Norm Mineta represented the Silicon Valley in the United States Congress. He understands the great challenges taking place in the economic life of our country. He has an understanding of the transportation needs of America. He knows that America relies more than ever on the soundness of our roads and rails, bridges and runways. And as our economy grows, so must our capacity to move people and goods quickly and efficiently.

This means investment in new infrastructure, as well as overdue repairs of the old. Working with State and local governments, we will work to meet the demands of our growing economy.

Americans are especially concerned about our aviation system. The results of economic expansion are clearly visible at our crowded airports. We must continue to reform and modernize the Federal Aviation Administration, and our Secretary of Transportation brings the talents necessary to address the problems and, more importantly, find the solutions.

Our new Secretary will also work with States and localities in planning new roads and alternative transportation, such as bus and light-rail systems. From Los Angeles to Austin to right here in Washington, the trials of commuting increase every year. It's going to take some clear thinking and creativity to accommodate our Nation's increasing travel demands. And Norm Mineta is the right man for the job.

It's a high honor to serve the two Cabinets, as the Vice President said. Norm has earned this honor. His life is a story of determination and courage and service. As a child, he lived

in an internment camp. As a young man, he wore his country's uniform in Korea and Japan. From there, he went on to become a mayor, a Congressman, and a Cabinet Secretary.

I thank him for accepting my invitation to serve again, and I'm honored to have him by my side.

Mr. Secretary.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary Mineta's wife, Danealia. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary Mineta.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Iraq

February 8, 2001

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 12722 of August 2, 1990.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 8, 2001.

Remarks at J.C. Nalle Elementary School and an Exchange With Reporters

February 9, 2001

The President. Good morning, everybody. How are you?

Students. Good morning.

The President. Thanks for letting me come by to say hello. Shall we get started?

Teacher Nancy Tentman. Boys and girls, we have a very special guest this morning. We are honored this morning to have the President of the United States here with us in our classroom, and he will be reading a

story to us this morning. He's here on his visit to promote reading.

The President. I am here to promote reading. Thanks for letting me come by and read. First, I want to introduce the Secretary of Education, Dr. Rod Paige. He's a friend of mine. I knew Rod in Texas. He and I were from Texas. And I asked him to come up and become the Secretary of Education because he did such a fine job of being the superintendent of schools in Houston.

And we're all speaking about superintendents—we've got the superintendent of the Washington, DC, schools with us, Dr. Paul Vance.

Superintendent Paul Vance. Good morning, boys and girls.

Students. Good morning.

The President. Thanks for having us here at Nalle. I'm so glad to see your principal, Ms. Dobbins. She's a pretty special person, isn't she?

One of the things that happens when you get over 50—and I'm over 50—is you have trouble seeing. [*Laughter*] So in order for me to read this book called "More Than Anything Else," I had to put on my glasses.

This is also Black History Month. And what's important about Black History Month is to read about different heroes who have made a difference in making history and to realize there are fantastic role models. So this is a combination of history plus reading. So thanks for letting me come by.

One reason I like to highlight reading is, reading is the beginnings of the ability to be a good student. And if you can't read, it's going to be hard to realize dreams; it's going to be hard to go to college. So when your teachers say, "read," you ought to listen to her.

Ms. Tentman. Thank you.

The President. Also, I hope you read more than you watch TV. That's pretty hard. Does anybody do that, read more than they watch TV? [*Laughter*] It's good to read more than you watch TV. That's how you learn, and it's very important to practice.

Are you ready to go?

Students. Yes.

The President. Has anybody read this book yet?

Students. No.

[*The President read to the students.*]

The President. And that's the end of the story. And the story is about a young fellow who grew up very poor and worked really hard. But he knew something. He knew, if he learned to read, he could change his life. I think it's a great story, don't you?

Students. Yes.

The President. It's a story that teaches the power of reading and what it means. So that's what's important, to be able to read, because you can read somebody else's experiences too. And you can share. And this is the story of an unbelievable young man who became a great reader and a great leader.

So thanks for having me come. Anybody got any questions?

Ms. Tentman. Mr. President, we have a tradition here in our classroom that whenever we read a book—we have a reading chain here in our classroom. In each book we write the title and the author, and we'd be honored if you would join us in our reading chain by adding that book to our reading chain.

The President. I will do that. Thanks for letting me do that.

Good to see everybody.

[*The President signed a link for his book and added it to the classroom's reading chain, and then he autographed the book.*]

Ms. Tentman. Alright. Thank you so much. And we'll add that.

The President. I'm going to leave this here for you, too, as a gift.

Ms. Tentman. Okay. Thank you so much.

The President. Thanks, I appreciate it.

Ms. Tentman. And we will add this, boys and girls, to the end of our chain, and the President has signed it, "More Than Anything Else."

The President. How about that? It's pretty nice, isn't it? Thanks for having me come.

One of the reasons I came is, I think it's important for the Capital to stay focused on public education and public education reforms. One of the key ingredients in our package we sent up to the Congress is a reading initiative. I'm so impressed about what Ms. Dobbins is doing at this school, what the superintendent is insisting upon—accountability-based reading system.

And she told me that they've got a collaborative effort here with the National Institute of Health, which has developed curriculum based upon the science of reading. And it's impressive that the school and the District are willing to set high standards and ask the fundamental question: What works in education; are willing to implement curriculum that works; and then are willing to be held accountable for implementing the curriculum.

And thank you for letting me come. I appreciate you coming.

I'll be glad to answer a few questions.

Racial Profiling

Q. Mr. President, would you be interested in establishing a panel along the vein of what President Johnson did, to look into racial profiling or, perhaps, considering an Executive order banning racial profiling?

The President. I'll look at all opportunities, starting with the gathering of information, where the Federal Government can help jurisdictions, gather information, compile information to get the facts on the table to make sure that people are treated fairly in the justice system.

Defense Budget

Q. Mr. President, do you have any—[*inaudible*—] of agreeing to the Pentagon's request that you increase your defense spending, your defense budget, or give a supplemental for 2000?

The President. I've sent the message that I think it's very important for us to not have an early supplemental. Secondly, Secretary Rumsfeld is beginning a review of the defense, a top to bottom review of what's happening in today's military, reviewing missions, reviewing opportunities for change, beginning to look at the transformation policy. And I will look forward to finding out what his report says.

I will be traveling the country next week, talking about some increases in the defense spending, along the lines of what I promised during the course of the campaign, starting with better pay for the men and women who wear the uniform.

Q. But they're saying it's going to affect military readiness.

The President. What's going to affect military—

Q. They're saying that they need more money—excuse me—they're not going to be able to be prepared for—

The President. Well, that's part of the review process. I hear—there are a lot of voices on a lot of subjects regarding the budget. We have yet to submit our budget; I will later on. But I have said during the campaign, I have said since I've been sworn in, it's important for us to do a top to bottom review, to review all missions, spending priorities, and that's exactly what the Secretary of Defense is going to do. And before people jump to conclusions, I think it's important to get that review finished.

Justice Department Budget

Q. What about the Justice Department? Are you asking for specific cuts in—[*inaudible*].

The President. We're looking at all—we've asked our Secretaries on all Cabinets to take a review of their full budgets, and we'll submit a budget here later on.

Office of National AIDS Policy

Q. Mr. President, on the subject of the AIDS Office, there are still some misunderstanding about whether there is going to be an AIDS czar, like—

The President. Well, there's going to be a focus on AIDS, and people can apply any title they want. But there's going to be a person in my office who has got the responsibility of coordinating the AIDS policy throughout the Federal Government.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. What did you say to Mr. Arafat?

The President. Oh, I had a good talk with Mr. Arafat. I've also had talks with other leaders throughout the region, and I urged calm. I said it was very important to give the newly elected leader of Israel a chance, a chance to form a government and a chance to do what he said he wanted to do, which is to promote the peace in the region. And

I certainly hope that people recognize that change does not necessarily mean that the peace process won't go forward.

I think we ought to take Mr. Sharon for his word, and that is he wants to promote peace in the Middle East. I look forward to watching him put a government together and then fulfilling what he said he would do.

Q. Are you concerned about the violence yesterday, the bombings?

The President. I'm concerned about all kinds of violence. But I firmly believe that the best policy is to encourage leaders to just remain resolute in their willingness to promote the peace and give the Sharon government a chance to form a government and then to be able to do what he said he wanted to do, which is to promote peace in the Middle East.

Have a good weekend, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:21 a.m. in Ms. Tentman's classroom. In his remarks, he referred to Gloria Dobbins, principal, J.C. Nalle Elementary School; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and Prime Minister-elect Ariel Sharon of Israel.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

February 4

The President traveled from Camp David, MD, to Farmington, PA, to attend a Democratic Party retreat.

February 5

The President had a working luncheon with Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark A. Weinberger to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Tax Policy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Paul Wolfowitz to be Deputy Secretary of Defense.

February 6

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister-elect Ariel Sharon of Israel to congratulate Mr. Sharon on his electoral victory.

The White House announced that the President announced his intention to name Richard Haas as Director of Policy Planning for the State Department.

The White House announced that the President announced his intention to nominate Ambassador Marc Grossman to be Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

The White House announced that the President announced his intention to nominate Grant S. Green to be Under Secretary of State for Management.

February 8

In the morning, the President had separate telephone conversations with Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and Sultan Qaboos of Oman.

The President announced his intention to nominate Senator Bill Frist to be one of two Senate representatives to the 55th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michele Davis to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Public Affairs.

February 9

In the morning, the President met with State and local superintendents of education in the Roosevelt Room. Later, he met separately in the Oval Office with Mardi Gras Queens, Utah Jazz basketball player Karl Malone, and a group of incumbent Louisiana politicians who recently switched their affiliations to the Republican Party. Later in the morning, the President had separate telephone conversations with King Mohamed VI of Morocco and Prime Minister Giuliano Amato of Italy.

In the afternoon, the President went to Camp David, MD.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted February 6

Joe M. Allbaugh,
of Texas, to be Director of the Federal
Emergency Management Agency.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released February 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Ari Fleischer

Released February 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Ari Fleischer

Statement by the Press Secretary: Election of Ariel Sharon as Prime Minister of Israel

Released February 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Ari Fleischer

Announcement: Principles for a Bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights

Released February 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Ari Fleischer

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Larry Lindsey on proposed tax cut legislation

Released February 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Ari Fleischer

Statement by the Press Secretary on National Mediation Board action regarding Northwest Airlines and the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Organization

**Acts Approved
by the President**

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.