

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:52 p.m. on March 18 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 19 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Janet Norwood, mother of Sgt. Byron Norwood, USMC. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

### **Statement on Signing Legislation for the Relief of the Parents of Theresa Marie Schiavo**

*March 21, 2005*

Today I signed into law a bill that will allow Federal courts to hear a claim by or on behalf of Terri Schiavo for violation of her rights relating to the withholding or withdrawal of food, fluids, or medical treatment necessary to sustain her life. In cases like this one, where there are serious questions and substantial doubts, our society, our laws, and our courts should have a presumption in favor of life. This presumption is especially critical for those like Terri Schiavo who live at the mercy of others. I appreciate the bipartisan action by the Members of Congress to pass this bill. I will continue to stand on the side of those defending life for all Americans, including those with disabilities.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 686, which was assigned Public Law No. 109-3.

### **Remarks to Seniors in Tucson, Arizona**

*March 21, 2005*

[*The President's remarks are joined in progress.*]

**The President.** —now it's our turn to sacrifice for future generations, and we are. This world is becoming more peaceful, and it's because we're free. And that's a lesson we've learned from previous generations, that free societies are peaceful societies. You know, I have this great faith in the capacity of freedom to make the world a better place, so I just want to give you a quick foreign policy report and tell you that this world of

ours is getting better as more people become free.

I'm also talking, of course, a lot about Social Security. I think this is a generational issue, and it's a generational issue because your generation has nothing to worry about in terms of getting the promise Government has made. There's just no doubt about it. I know there are some contradictory statements being made; it's just not true. The promise Government has made to those who are retired or near retirement will be kept.

But because the math has changed, because there's a lot of baby boomers like me are getting ready to retire, and we're living longer, and we're getting bigger benefits than the previous generation, and there are fewer workers, we need to worry about not this generation but the next generations.

And that's really what I'm here to tell people in Tucson, is that if you're getting your check, you're fine. If you've got a grandkid, you'd better ask the political people what they intend to do about making sure Social Security, the safety net of Social Security, is available for them. And you know, I'm interested in all ideas. I think that this isn't a Republican issue or a Democrat issue; this is a national issue that requires a national dialog.

So I want to thank you for giving me the chance to come back to the Udall Center. The mayor was telling me what a unique place it is, and he wasn't exaggerating.

**Audience member.** Yes, it's great.

**The President.** It is great—well, I hope so.

Are you playing a little cards over there? I've got a little time for some cards. [*Laughter*] Anyway, thanks for letting me come by. I'm looking forward to meeting you all. Thank you. It's a beautiful city you've got here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:51 a.m. at the Morris K. Udall Recreation Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Bob Walkup of Tucson, AZ. The press release issued by the Office of the Press Secretary did not include the complete opening remarks of the President. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Remarks in a Discussion on  
Strengthening Social Security in  
Tucson**

*March 21, 2005*

**The President.** Thank you all. Thanks. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. It is nice to be back in Tucson. The last time I was here, remember, we were up dealing with forest fires. And hopefully, the Healthy Forest legislation that we got passed, thanks to the help of John and Jon and members of the Arizona congressional delegation, will help us preserve this valuable national treasure.

I'm here today to talk with some distinguished citizens from your State about Social Security. Before I do so, I'd say—I've got some other things I want to talk about. [Laughter] First, I want to talk about how much I enjoy working with Senator John McCain. I appreciate the job he's doing for the people of Arizona. And I appreciate Senator Jon Kyl from the great State of Arizona. I'm glad you're being nice to him, because he is on the Senate Finance Committee. [Laughter] They're going to write the bill to make sure we have a Social Security system not only available for today's seniors but for the next generation coming up. That's what we're here to talk about. Senator, thank you for your leadership on this issue.

And how about Congressman Jim Kolbe. Appreciate you being here. Jim Kolbe has taken a lead on this issue as well. He's doing something that needs to happen. He's reached across the aisle; he has found a Democrat partner to help come up with some ideas as to how to make sure Social Security is strong for generations to come. I'm proud of your leadership, Jim. I want to thank you. He said he's been working on this issue for quite awhile.

I'm proud that Congressman Trent Franks is with us, and his wife, Josie. Thanks for coming. Congressman John Shadegg is with us. I appreciate you being here, John. You allow people from Colorado in the State? Yes. Well, if that's the case, then why don't we introduce Bob Beauprez, Congressman from Colorado, and Congressman Joel Hefley. McCain said, "Thank you for the water." [Laughter]

Speaking about water, I had a fascinating discussion with your mayor about water for Tucson. Mayor Bob Walkup and I actually had talked about water my last trip here. He told me that he was going to work to put a long-term plan in place to make sure this great city and this part of the world has got ample supplies of water. Mr. Mayor, thank you for your vision, and thank you for your hard work on that issue.

I'm proud we've got folks from the state-house here. Secretary of State Jan Brewer is with us. Madam Secretary, thank you for joining us. Good to see you again. The president of the senate and the speaker of the house are with us. We're honored you all are here. Thanks for coming. Good to see you men again. We got supervisors; we got local officials.

Mostly I want to thank the Tucson Chamber of Commerce for hosting this event. I appreciate you being here. Steve Touche and Jack Camper, I'm honored that you all would—and the Chamber members for inviting us to come and have a dialog about a really important issue, which I'm working my way toward. [Laughter]

I know you're playing baseball here. I wish the mighty Diamondbacks, with Ken Kendrick, all the best this year. Good to see you, Ken. Thank you, sir. Good luck.

Russell Gursky is with us. Russell, thank you for coming. Russ, why don't you stand up. Hold your applause for Russell. Russell, you right there. Oh, there he is, sorry. This Russell Gursky. He came to the airport. He is a volunteer, 91 years old, still volunteering with the RSVP program to provide help at the Tucson Police Department. I'm honored for your service. Thank you for volunteering, sir.

A couple of issues I do want to talk about. Democrats and Republicans in Congress came together last night to give Terri Schiavo's parents another opportunity to save their daughter's life. This is a complex case with serious issues, but in extraordinary circumstances like this, it is wise to always err on the side of life. I appreciate the work of the Senate and the House to get that bill for me to sign last night at about 1:08—on this morning, at about 1:08.