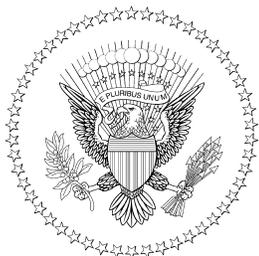


Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**



Monday, April 4, 2005  
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Pages 521–550

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## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

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## PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Week Ending Friday, April 1, 2005

**The President's Radio Address**

*March 26, 2005*

Good morning. This weekend, millions of Americans celebrate the joyous holiday of Easter. Easter is the most important event of the Christian faith, when people around the world join together with family and friends to celebrate the power of love conquering death.

At Easter time we pray for all who serve in our military. The outstanding members of our Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard are keeping America secure and advancing liberty in the world. We remember especially those who have given their lives in freedom's cause. Their sacrifice is a testament to the words of scripture: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Easter has a special meaning for the families of our men and women in uniform who miss their loved ones during the holidays. It can be very difficult when someone you love is deployed on a dangerous mission in a distant land. I appreciate the sacrifices our military families are making, and Americans know that their contributions are vital to our success in the war on terror.

This week we have seen tragedy at home. Families in Minnesota are mourning the loss of their loved ones after the terrible shootings at Red Lake High School. Hours after the shooting, communities and churches across the Nation offered prayers for the victims and their families. The Red Lake Nation reports receiving thousands of calls from people all over the world offering their sympathy and support. Laura and I are praying for the families of the victims, as are millions of Americans.

This week I spoke with Red Lake Tribal Chairman Floyd Jourdain to express the condolences of the American people and to pledge the continued help of the Federal Government. We are doing everything we

can to meet the needs of the community at this tragic time. The FBI and the Department of Justice are working to coordinate relief through the Federal Crime Victim Assistance Fund. We're working closely with State, local, and tribal authorities to provide counseling, help with funeral arrangements, and other assistance.

The tragedy at Red Lake was accompanied by acts of heroism and selflessness. A security guard named Derrick Brun saved the lives of countless students when he rose from his desk to confront the young gunman. Although he was unarmed, Derrick ignored the pleas of a colleague to run for his life. By engaging the assailant, he bought vital time for a fellow security guard to rush a group of students to safety. Derrick's bravery cost him his life, and all Americans honor him.

As we help the families in this community, we must do everything in our power to prevent tragedies like this from happening. Children benefit from a sense of community and the support and involvement of caring adults. To keep our children safe and protected, we must continue to foster a culture that affirms life and provides love and helps our young people build character.

On this Easter weekend, we honor all Americans who give of themselves, from those helping neighbors at home to those defending liberty overseas. Easter is the victory of light over darkness. In this season of renewal, we remember that hope leads us closer to truth and that in the end, even death, itself, will be defeated. That is the promise of Easter morning.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:30 a.m. on March 25 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 25 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

### **Remarks to Reporters at Fort Hood, Texas**

*March 27, 2005*

I want to wish all the fellow citizens and their families a happy Easter. We prayed for peace. We prayed for our soldiers and their families. It's an honor to be here at Fort Hood to celebrate Easter with those who wear the Nation's uniform.

We wish you all a happy Easter too. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:53 a.m. at the 4th Infantry Division Memorial Chapel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Remarks on Freedom and Democracy in Iraq**

*March 29, 2005*

Thank you all. Thank you. Good morning. Welcome to the White House. Please be seated. Senator Warner, it's good to see you, sir. Thank you for coming. I appreciate citizens from Iraq who have joined us. I appreciate my fellow citizens who have joined us. Thanks for coming.

Before I talk about Iraq, I do want to say that on behalf of the American people, Laura and I offer our condolences to the victims of yesterday's earthquake in Indonesia. This earthquake has claimed lives and destroyed buildings in a part of Indonesia that is only now beginning to recover from the destruction caused by the tsunami 3 months ago. Our officials have offered initial assistance and are moving quickly to gather information to determine what additional relief is needed.

I appreciate Andrew Natsios of USAID being with us today, and I know he and his team are ready to respond, to help. People of Indonesia can know as well that they have our prayers and that our Government is ready to assist.

Just a few minutes ago I met with a group of people dedicated to building a new Iraq. Most of them were born in Iraq. They come from different backgrounds. They practice different religions. They have one thing in common: They all voted in the January elections.

We're also joined today by Iraqi law students visiting the United States for an international competition, by members of Iraq's religious communities in town to learn about democracy, and by others who helped organize the—Iraq's elections held in the United States. I want to welcome you all. I want to thank you for your strong belief in democracy and freedom. It's a belief that with their vote, the Iraqi people signalled to the world that they intend to claim their liberty and build a future of freedom for their country. And it was a powerful signal.

I commend the more than 8 million Iraqis who defied the car bombers and assassins to vote that day. I appreciate the determination of the Iraqi electoral workers who withstood threats and intimidation to make a transparent election possible. I salute the courageous Iraqi security forces who risked their lives to protect voters.

By electing 275 men and women to the Transitional National Assembly, the Iraqi people took another bold step toward self-government. Today Iraqis took another step on the road to a free society when the Assembly held its second meeting. We expect a new Government will be chosen soon and that the Assembly will vote to confirm it. We look forward to working with the Government that emerges from this process. We're confident that this new Government will be inclusive, will respect human rights, and will uphold fundamental freedoms for all Iraqis.

We have seen many encouraging signs in Iraq. The world has watched Iraqi women vote in enormous numbers. The world has seen more than 80 women take their seats as elected representatives in the new Assembly. We've also seen the beginnings of a new national dialog, as leaders who did well in the last election have reached out to Sunnis who did not participate.

In a democracy, the Government must uphold the will of the majority while respecting the rights of minorities. And Iraq's new leaders are determined that the Government of a free Iraq will be representative of their country's diverse population. The new Transitional National Assembly includes people and parties with differing visions for the future of their country. In a democratic Iraq, these differences will be resolved through

debate and persuasion instead of force and intimidation.

In forming their new Government, the Iraqis have shown that the spirit of compromise has survived more than three decades of dictatorship. They will need that spirit in the weeks and months ahead as they continue the hard work of building their democracy. After choosing the leaders of their new Government, the next step will be the drafting of a new constitution for a free and democratic Iraq. In October, that document is scheduled to be put before the Iraqi people in a national referendum. Once the new constitution is approved, Iraqis will return to the polls to elect a permanent constitutional Government.

This democracy will need defending. And Iraqi security forces are taking on greater responsibility in the fight against the insurgents and terrorists. Today, more than 145,000 Iraqis have been trained and are serving courageously across Iraq. In recent weeks, they've taken the lead in offensive operations in places like Baghdad and Samara and Mosul. We will continue to train Iraqis so they can take responsibility for the security of their country, and then our forces will come home with the honor they've earned.

Iraqis are taking big steps on a long journey of freedom. A free society requires more than free elections; it also requires free institutions, a vibrant civil society, rule of law, anticorruption, and the habits of liberty built over generations. By claiming their own freedom, the Iraqis are transforming the region, and they're doing it by example and inspiration rather than by conquest and domination. The free people of Iraq are now doing what Saddam Hussein never could—making Iraq a positive example for the entire Middle East.

Today, people in a long-troubled part of the world are standing up for their freedom. In the last few months, we've witnessed successful elections in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Palestinian Territories; peaceful demonstrations on the streets of Beirut; and steps toward democratic reform in places like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The trend is clear: Freedom is on the march. Freedom is the birthright and deep desire of every human soul, and spreading freedom's blessings is the call-

ing of our time. And when freedom and democracy take root in the Middle East, America and the world will be safer and more peaceful.

I want to thank you all for coming. We ask for God's blessings on the brave souls of Iraq, and God continue to bless the American people. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Interview With WHO Radio in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

March 30, 2005

### Social Security

**Jan Mickelson.** The President probably wants to get in on this conversation. [Laughter] It's an honor seeing you again, sir.

**The President.** How are you doing?

**Mr. Mickelson.** I'm doing great. You realize what a risk you've done, latching on to this Social Security thing? You put our number one Senator at grave risk. [Laughter] He had to burn his AARP card. [Laughter] Do you realize what a cheap buzzard that guy is? [Laughter]

**The President.** No, I remember the ads with the lawnmower. [Laughter]

**Mr. Mickelson.** Well, see, he can't use his AARP discount anywhere anymore. He had to burn that card.

**The President.** Well, you know, I appreciate the chairman. He's got some political courage, which is necessary to take on tough problems. It's pretty easy to ignore problems in politics. What's hard is to take on a tough problem. And both Senator Grassley and I have dedicated ourselves to taking on the tough problem of Social Security, and it is a problem.

**Mr. Mickelson.** I was also warned by the Secret Service to keep the microphone away from you in a diner situation—[laughter]—because you have a karaoke gland that breaks out into Alan Jackson songs at the drop of a hat. Try to restrain yourself this morning, sir. [Laughter]

**The President.** Thank you very much. If you've ever heard me sing, you know it's not an issue. [Laughter]

**Mr. Mickelson.** I think it was the minority leader, Harry Reid, said, "Social Security is a real crisis that exists only in one place, in the minds of Republicans." How would you respond to that?

**The President.** Well, I would say that there's been a lot of people who aren't Republicans who've looked at this issue and have said the world has changed and is changing and that we have a problem for younger generations of Americans. The Social Security trust, for example—or the trustees came out with a report recently that said, "In 2017, the Social Security trust goes into the negative. In 2041, it is flat broke."

And the reason why is because baby boomers, like me and you, are getting ready to retire, and there's a lot of us, and we're living longer.

**Mr. Mickelson.** What have you heard? I mean, I wasn't planning on retiring. [Laughter]

**The President.** Well, this isn't forced retirement. [Laughter] You get to be retirement age whether you want to or not.

**Mr. Mickelson.** I'm still in denial about that.

**The President.** Well, I'm afraid we're headed there. But there's a lot of us, and we've been promised greater benefits, and there's fewer workers. So you've got more people getting greater benefits, living longer, and fewer people paying into the system. And it's just not going to work. And so I think one of the things that's happened, in this 60-day period that we set out to explain to the country we have a problem, is that people are now beginning to understand there is a problem.

And the second thing that people are beginning to figure out is that if you're 55 and over, you don't have anything to worry about; the Government is going to pay the promised benefits. And that's an important thing for people to understand. There's a lot of people in Iowa counting on their Social Security check, and they just need to hear the truth, and the truth is—

**Mr. Mickelson.** Five hundred and sixty-two thousand of us.

**The President.** That's a lot of you—not "us." You're not one yet.

**Mr. Mickelson.** Well, there's 562,000 Iowans that receive some kind of Social Security benefit, and 2 out of 5 Americans do.

**The President.** That's right, and that's why it's an important program. That's why it's important to reassure those who receive a check, nothing changes. The people who need to worry about this issue are the younger Americans. They're the ones who are going to have to pay enormous taxes or get enormous benefit cuts if this Government is not willing to respond now. And so, to answer the question of the skeptics, we do have a serious problem.

**Mr. Mickelson.** The red State division and blue State division affects this debate extremely importantly and efficiently. The Democrats are marketing their opposition to any kind of Social Security reform in the following way. I was up on their web site, and this is how they describe the nature of their opposition. And they have four different categories—they say women, blacks, Hispanics, and the disabled all receive a progressive return from Social Security. They get more than they pay in. In essence, they say, you'd be an idiot, therefore, to go along with any kind of reform, because they have it pretty good now, by comparison, paying a little in—or less in than other wage earners. So why should we vote for something that, in essence, we think might disenfranchise us?

**The President.** Well, again, nothing changes if you're 55 years and older. I mean, the progressivity in the system stays in the system. Plus, you can make the system progressive for your younger workers. But a younger worker, whether they live in a blue State or a red State, ought to be wondering whether or not the Congress has got the will necessary to fix this problem, because if we don't, the system starts going into the red, negative, in 2017.

Do you realize, in 2027, the cost just to make good on the promises is going to be over \$200 billion a year? It gets worse every year from 2017 to 2041. And so there's a huge hole that can only be filled by dramatic benefit reductions and/or payroll increases. It's estimated that in order to fix the problem if we wait, it will—payroll taxes will have to

get up to 18 percent. And that's unsatisfactory, as far as I'm concerned. And younger workers, blue State, red State, need to worry about this problem.

Now, older Americans do not. And I keep saying that, because I know there's some propaganda out there that says to older Americans, "You know, old Grassley and Bush are going to take away your check." Well, I've heard this before, every time I've run for office. Nothing changes. The Government will keep its promise for those of us over 55 years old. It's younger people. This is a generational issue, Jan, because many grandparents are now beginning to realize they're going to get their check, and they're starting to ask the question, "What about my grandchildren; what are you going to do about the grandchildren," because this is a serious problem.

**Mr. Mickelson.** I really appreciate the phrase you use, the "ownership society."

**The President.** Yes.

**Mr. Mickelson.** That really works. Now, how do we get the people who view themselves as recipients to see themselves as potential owners, so they don't feel threatened by a transformation of the system that you have in mind?

**The President.** Yes, well, first of all, you're referring to the personal savings account aspect of a solution. And the reason I believe it's important to encourage—or to allow younger workers, if they so choose, to set aside some of their own money in a personal savings account is threefold. One, they will get a better rate of return on their money than they're going to get if the Government holds it for them. In other words, in a conservative mix of bonds and stocks held over time, the rate of return on the money, the growth of the money, the fact that it's going to be growing in a compounded way is going to be greater.

**Mr. Mickelson.** Even if they haven't paid in as much, initially, to push them into that progressive recipient category in which they now exist?

**The President.** Well, you can do both. First of all, it's more progressive, by the way, if you get a greater rate of return on your money than if you don't. But you can also make sure the benefits that end up being de-

termined by Congress—in other words, the benefits that the Government can afford—they're progressive in nature as well.

But progressivity really depends upon how the benefit structure is decided by Congress. We've got some money for some benefits; we just don't have enough to pay the promises made to younger workers. And the best way to allow a younger worker to more approximate that which the Government has promised is to let them earn a better rate of return on their money.

Secondly, I like the idea of somebody owning something. I mean, there is kind of this mindset that only a certain investor class can manage their own money. I think that's a preposterous assumption. I think everybody ought to be encouraged to manage their own money.

And thirdly, we do this, Jan—this is a very important point—this isn't a novel idea. Federal workers get to do this in what's called—in the Federal employee program, retirement program. They get to take some of their own money and set it aside so they get a better rate of return than that which the Government can get for them. And Senator Grassley's employees get to do that; people working for the Agriculture Department get to do it. My attitude, if it's good enough for Federal employees, it ought to be good enough for younger workers.

**Mr. Mickelson.** Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan keeps using another very powerful word describing much of our social safety net, "unsustainable."

**The President.** Yes.

**Mr. Mickelson.** We can't do it. Demographically, as you mentioned earlier, we aren't reproducing ourselves.

**The President.** Right.

#### **Medicare/HSAs/Tax Reform**

**Mr. Mickelson.** The same logic that you applied aptly to Social Security also applies to our medical delivery system.

**The President.** That's right.

**Mr. Mickelson.** Can we also move to the ownership concept in that, in medical IRAs, and make those universal, maybe using medical IRA vouchers? And how about using the earned-income tax that lower income people get and empower a savings account, so they

get an ownership concept using their money in that regard?

**The President.** That's a very good point. As a matter of fact, the Senator and I worked on Medicare reform. We wanted the current system to work better for those people who are going to get—that are on Medicare. We wanted—for example, I think there's a lot of benefit to have a prescription drug plan available in Medicare because a lot of people will be able to avoid major surgery by taking prescription drugs. In other words, Medicare would pay for heart surgery but not a dime for the prescription drugs that might prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. So we modernized Medicare and, by the way, took care of rural hospitals in Iowa as we did so.

Secondly, though, in that bill is the notion of health savings accounts, which provides an IRA-type approach, as you mentioned, to encourage people to set aside money on a tax-free basis so they get to make the decisions for their own health care—in other words, own their own health care plan. And it's a great idea that is now beginning to take hold with a lot of small businesses and a lot of employees for small businesses.

Thirdly, I've consistently proposed, Jan, that we have tax credits for the working poor people so that they, themselves, can go in the marketplace and own their own account. And yes, so to answer your question, absolutely, we can extend ownership.

**Mr. Mickelson.** So they earn—they keep the time value of their own money.

**The President.** Precisely.

**Mr. Mickelson.** That's the chief weakness of the current system.

**The President.** On a tax-free basis, with the HSAs, by the way.

### **Social Security**

**Mr. Mickelson.** The birth-death issue that you made reference to, that's the elephant in the room. We have to address that. Our culture is not—it's not the first time this has happened. I was reading—Teddy Roosevelt addressed this in the early part of the century, dealing with the birth dearth in the last century, and he saw that that generation of Americans were not reproducing them-

selves. And do you want to hear a really snotty quote from Teddy Roosevelt? He said—

**The President.** I don't have much choice. [Laughter]

**Mr. Mickelson.** Yes, you do. You have the Executive order. [Laughter]

It says, "If you do not believe in your own stock enough to wish to see the stock kept up, then you're not good Americans, and you're not patriots. I, for one, would not mourn your extinction, and in such event, I would welcome the advent of a new race that would take your place, because you will have shown that you are not even fit to cumber the ground."

So that's pretty—that's a bully pulpit.

**The President.** He was a colorful person. [Laughter] That's what I've been doing, using the bully pulpit over the last weeks to remind people we have a problem. And it's easy in politics to ignore problems. It's just easy to say, "Well, there's no problem." But this is a serious problem for younger generations of Americans, and I believe there is a duty as the President—and fortunately, Senator Grassley believes there's a duty as the chairman of the Finance Committee in the Senate—to take on problems and not pass them on. See, the easy route is to say, "Well, we really don't have a problem." But what's going to end up happening is, in 2017, people are going to show up to work, and they're going to realize their payroll taxes have gone up significantly to pay for promises that the Government has made.

And so I'm saying to people, now is the time to fix it. And I think there's a political price for not getting involved in the process. I think there's a political price for saying, "It's not a problem. I'm going to stay away from the table." So in my State of the Union Address I called upon Members of Congress, both parties, to bring good ideas forward.

**Mr. Mickelson.** Has the third rail moved?

**The President.** I think it has. I think you'd made a mistake not addressing Social Security. I think the American people, when they figure out how significant this problem is—and they're beginning to figure it out—are then going to demand, from both Republicans and Democrats, leadership.

And I am—I love this—I love taking on big issues, because I think that's my job. I

think that's why the people of the country put me in office. They expect a President to lead, and they expect a chairman of the Finance Committee to lead as well. And fortunately, the good State of Iowa has got such a man in Charles Grassley. I'm looking forward to working with him on this issue.

**Mr. Mickelson.** Can I expect that in an upcoming press conference that you're attending that you will get up and address the Nation and tell the population of the United States, "Get out there and reproduce, or don't cumber the ground?" [Laughter]

**The President.** No, you can't expect that. [Laughter]

**Mr. Mickelson.** "Get off the—have some more kids or get off the planet." [Laughter]

**The President.** You can expect me to keep talking about Social Security. [Laughter] You can expect it because now is the time to solve this problem. And I repeat to the grandparents out there that if we do not act, your grandchildren are going to be saddled with a huge burden. This Government has made promises it cannot keep. It'll keep the promises to those of us over 55 years old, but it has made promises to a lot of younger Americans it cannot keep, and now is the time to solve the problem.

And I'm going to keep working with Members of Congress from both political parties to do our duty. And I like traveling the country. I like coming to the great State of Iowa—been here quite a few times and may have to come back to keep pounding on the issue, but it is the right thing to do, which is to address problems.

**Mr. Mickelson.** Mr. President, thank you for visiting Iowa.

**The President.** Thanks for coming over.

**Mr. Mickelson.** Thank you for visiting us. Senator Grassley, thank you for gracing us.

**Senator Grassley.** Pleasure to be with you.

**Mr. Mickelson.** Thank you for being here.

NOTE: The interview began at 11:18 a.m. at the Spring House Family Restaurant and was broadcast live on the "Mickelson in the Morning" program.

## Remarks in a Discussion on Strengthening Social Security in Cedar Rapids

March 30, 2005

**The President.** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for coming. I want to thank our panelists here. We're about to discuss Social Security. Before we do, I've got some things I want to say.

First, I want to thank the good folks here at Kirkwood Community College for letting us come by. It's a fantastic facility you got here. I want to thank Mick and Steve and all the faculty here. I believe the community college system is an important part of making sure that our economy continues to grow. And the reason why is, one of the bottlenecks for economic growth is to whether or not we've got a workforce that is trained for the jobs of the 21st century. There is no better place to train people for the jobs of the 21st century than the community college system in America. And so I want to thank you for letting us come by.

I want to thank Chuck Grassley. He and I just came from the Spring House. Yes, it was nice. We had a cup of coffee. I hope you paid, Senator. [Laughter] Well, I forgot your reputation. [Laughter] I guess I had to pick up the check, probably. [Laughter] But I'm proud of the Senator's leadership on the Finance Committee. This will be the committee in the United States Senate that will start a piece of legislation that will modernize Social Security. He's committed, as am I, to taking on this big issue. And as I told them at the Spring House, he's stubborn. I'm going to be stubborn on the issue, and we're going to keep working this until we get something done. We need to. Now is the time to address tough problems, before it becomes acute for younger generations of Americans. Thank you for understanding that, Chuck. Appreciate you coming.

I want to thank Congressman Jim Leach, the Congressman from this district. I'm looking forward to—Leach is flying back with me. I'm always a better person after having sat down to listen to his wisdom. [Laughter] He's a good, strong guy, and I'm proud that you're here.

As well as Jim Nussle, chairman of the Budget Committee for the House of Representatives. Thank you for coming, Jim. I appreciate working with Chairman Nussle. He's done a very good job on the budget. Now this is the year in which we're going to set priorities again—we did it last time; we're going to do it this time—set clear priorities. And we're not going to fund programs that don't work. It seems like to make a lot of sense to me that we're wise about how we spend your money. And there's no better partner in being wise about how we spend the people's money than Jim Nussle. I'm proud of your leadership and proud to call you friend.

And your parents are here. Yes, you brought mom—mom and dad—good, yes. You still telling him what to do? *[Laughter]* So is my mother. *[Laughter]* The difference is, Nussle is listening. *[Laughter]*

I want to say something about Senator Chuck Larson. I appreciate you being here, Chuck. I want to thank you for your service to our country. State Auditor Dave Vaudt is with us. Mr. Auditor, thanks for coming. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. I appreciate Paul Pate joining us. I want to thank all the State and local officials for coming. Particularly, I want to thank you all for taking time out of your busy lives to become educated on a very important subject.

Before I do get there, I do want to say something about Al Smith. Al—I don't know if you know Al Smith. He's been involved with the Cedar Rapids Kernels Baseball Club. He organizes a program for children with special needs around baseball. He's also been a mentor. He told me that over his last, I think he said 40 years—didn't you say, Al? I think it's 40—you dealt with a million children. I want you to stand up. The reason why I wanted to introduce Al, he is a soldier in the army of compassion. He's a soul who understands that you can make a difference in a person's life, and I want to thank you for being here. Appreciate your service.

For those of you here interested in serving your Nation, find somebody who hurts and love them or feed the hungry or find shelter for those who are looking for housing. Al has done the same thing through a mentoring program, and I appreciate—he also told me

that he was in the Cleveland Indians organization and knew Rocky Colavito. Yes, pretty good. Obviously, we've got some baby boomers here. *[Laughter]*

A couple of things before we get to Social Security. One, I just talked to Laura this morning, and she sends her best. She knew I was coming to Cedar Rapids. She said to say hello to everybody there. She was calling from Afghanistan. She'd just gone over there, and she was explaining to me how hopeful it was to have gone to a dormitory for women at a teacher's college. We helped build that dormitory—we, the people of America.

Think about a society that has gone from a Taliban-dominated society where, if you were a woman and spoke your mind, you were taken to the public square and whipped, to a free society in which women are now being trained to be able to follow their hearts and teach. That's the difference between tyranny and freedom. And free societies—it's important for people to know, free societies will be peaceful societies. Free societies in the part of the world that's desperate for freedom sets a clear example to others that it's possible to be free. And it's—I've been impressed by the protests in Beirut, Lebanon, where people are saying to Syria, "Get out of our country so we can be a free country and a democracy."

I was impressed by the people of Iraq, who, in the face of car bombings and suiciders, said, "We're going to defy these folks because we want to be free." And they voted in overwhelming numbers for the first Assembly, democratically elected Assembly in years. Freedom is on the march, which means peace is on the march. And we shouldn't be surprised, because in America we understand freedom, and we know freedom is not our gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

And flying in, I saw a lot of people on tractors. It's a good sign. *[Laughter]* But it reminded me about what is possible when it comes to reasonable energy policy. See, one day I hope that those tractors are planting fuel so we become less reliant on foreign sources of energy. We have got a significant problem. We're too dependent on energy sources from overseas, and it's beginning to

show up at your gas pump. We need to think differently about energy. And now is the time for Congress to pass an energy bill which encourages conservation, encourages research and development so that biodiesel or ethanol can work—more likely work in our automobiles, encourages the research and development on hydrogen-powered automobiles. We've got research and development going to FutureGen plants so that we can burn coal in a zero-emissions way.

In other words, now is the time to get a bill passed to not only make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy but to encourage new ways of using energy here in America. Now is the time for Congress to act and get the bill to my desk.

I could go on. Laura warned me, don't—she said, "Sometimes you talk too much, and so make sure you keep it relatively short here." And I said, "Okay, I'll try and give it my best shot." Obviously, I haven't done a very good job.

Let me talk about Social Security. I'm talking about Social Security because I see a problem, and I believe the job of the President is to confront problems and not pass them on to future Presidents or a future Congress. That's what I think you elected me for.

First, I agree with Chuck when he said that Franklin Roosevelt did a good thing in creating the Social Security system. Social Security has worked for a lot of people. It has provided a safety net for a lot of citizens. The problem is, there's a hole in the safety net for a generation which is coming up, and let me tell you why.

Let me—I'll just put it in personal terms. There's a lot of people like me getting ready to retire. We're called baby boomers. I turn 62 in 2008. It's a convenient year for me to retire, by the way. [*Laughter*] We are living longer than the previous generation. We have been promised more benefits than the previous generation. See, people ran for office saying, "Vote for me. I'm going to give you more benefits if you put me in." So you've got a lot of baby boomers getting ready to retire who will be living longer years and promised more benefits. That's part of the math.

The other part of the math is that there are fewer workers paying for people like me.

In 1950, there were 16 workers paying into the system for every beneficiary, so you can see the load wasn't that heavy. Today, it's 3.3 workers for every beneficiary. Soon, it's going to be 2 workers. If you're a younger person going to community college here, you're going to have to pay a lot of money out of your pocket to make sure I get the benefits I'm promised, unless we do something different.

So the math has changed. The system is an important system, but it's got a hole in the safety net. I say the hole in the safety net for the younger workers because if you're somebody who's retired or near retired, somebody born prior to 1950, you don't have a thing to worry about. The promise will be kept. I don't care what the politics—politicians say. I don't care what the propaganda says. The truth is, this Government will keep its promise to those people who are receiving their check today and the promise to those who were born prior to 1950.

When the math has changed like it is, the system starts going in the red pretty quickly. In 2017, there's going to be more money going out than coming in for Social Security. By the way, we don't have a trust in Social Security. It's called pay-as-you-go. See, some people think there's a Social Security trust where we've taken your money, and we've held it for you, and then when you retire, we give it back to you. No, what happens is we take your money; we pay money out for the promises for those people who have retired; and if we've got anything left over, we spend it on things other than Social Security. That's just the way it works. It's been working that way for a long period of time, and what's left are a pile of IOUs, paper.

Now, as a pay-as-you-go system, when you've got a lot of people like me retiring, getting bigger benefits, living longer, with fewer people paying in, pretty soon the system goes into the red. And it does in 2017. And every year thereafter, the situation gets worse and worse and worse. To give you an example, in 2027, the Government is going to have to come up with \$200 billion more than that which is coming in in payroll taxes just to make the promises.

So you can see from that chart there, the situation in 2017 gets bad, and it gets worse.

Don't take my word for it. Take the word of the Social Security Trustees. They issued a report recently. It said the situation is worse than we thought. In 2017, the system starts to go into the red, worse every year after. And the longer we wait, the harder it's going to be for a—younger workers to make up the difference.

So this is a generational issue. It's an issue that affects not those of you who have retired, but it affects your children and your grandchildren. And the fundamental question is, do we have the will in Washington, DC, to take on the tough problems?

I went in front of the Congress and I said, "Look, now is the time to act." And I fully understand, I'm telling you, the longer we wait, the tougher it's going to be on younger workers. And so I said, "All ideas are on the table." I said, "If you've got a good idea, bring it forward." I don't think there's a Democrat idea. I don't think it's a Republican idea. I think these are just ideas that need to be on the table. I think I'm the first President ever to have stood up and said, "Bring all your ideas forward." And that's an important message for members of both political parties to hear, that if you've got a good idea, we expect you to be at the table; we expect you to bring it forward. We—I expect you to bring it forward, but more importantly, the American people expect you to bring it forward. There's a lot of people who know we've got a problem when it comes to this issue, and now is the time for people to act.

And I think when they bring ideas forward, they've got to be with one thing in mind, fixing this issue permanently. In 1983, Tip O'Neill, Ronald Reagan, Bob Dole said, "We've got a problem. Let's see if we can't fix it." And they put together a 75-year fix, they said. First of all, I appreciate the spirit of Republicans and Democrats coming together. But it wasn't a 75-year fix. This was 1953 [1983]<sup>o</sup>. We're only in 2005. It wasn't a 75-year fix. If it was a 75-year fix, I wouldn't be sitting here talking about it. Now is the time, if we're going to come to the table, to do so and fix it permanently.

<sup>o</sup> White House correction.

Mr. Chairman understands that, and he's told both Republicans and Democrats, "If you think you've got a good idea, bring them forward." And people need to understand that, that we want to listen to good ideas. President Clinton had some ideas when he was the President. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan had some good ideas. As a matter of fact, in 2001, he was the Democrat Senator from New York. He'd retired. I asked him to serve on a Commission to look at Social Security. Republicans and Democrats came together and they came up with some very interesting ideas to fix the problem permanently. They didn't sit around the table and say, "I'm not going to listen to your idea because you happen to be a Democrat," and "I'm not going to listen to your idea because you happen to be a Republican." They said, "We have a duty and an obligation to come together and make recommendations to the President and the Congress, not based upon parties but based upon what will work."

And one of the ideas they brought forward, both Republicans and Democrats brought forward, is in order to make the system work for younger workers, that they ought to—we ought to allow younger workers to set aside some of their own money in a personal savings account as part of the Social Security; in other words, a voluntary program that says you should be allowed to take some of your own money—after all, it is your payroll tax—and put it aside in an account of bonds and stocks. That's what you ought to be allowed to do.

Now, this doesn't fix the system permanently, but it makes the system a better deal for younger workers. And I'll tell you why. First, a conservative mix of bonds and stocks earns a better rate of return on your money than the money that's being held in the Social Security—by the Government. And that's important for people to understand.

And as that money earns, it is a compounding rate of interest; it grows. For example, you take a worker making \$35,000 over his or her lifetime, and say, for example, a third of the payroll taxes, or 4 percent, were allowed to go into a personal savings account, that the nest egg that person would own over time in a conservative mix of bonds and stocks would grow to \$250,000, see. That

would be a nice part of a retirement package. There will be a Social Security system that the Government is going to pay you benefits. I can't tell you how much until we get people together to the table, but it will be augmented. Your Social Security plan, your benefits will be augmented by the money coming out of your own account. In other words, money grows if you hold it over time. It's not growing right now at a significant enough rate. It will grow if you're able to save it.

Secondly, I like the idea of people owning something. I want more people owning something, not fewer people. There's this kind of notion that this investor class in America only applies to a certain group of people. That's not what I think. I think the more investors we have, the more owners we have in America, the better off America is. And I want to see ownership spread throughout all our society.

I like the idea of someone working their lifetime building a nest egg they call their own and passing it on to whomever they want. That ought to be—that idea ought to be available to people from all walks of life. I like the idea of having a plan to help somebody whose spouse may have died prior to retirement. Think about the Social Security system today. If you're a—been working 30 years, started at age 21, and you're 51 years old and you pass away and you still—and you've got a wife or a husband, the money in the system—the wife or husband doesn't get any of the money until he or she retires. And then, if he or she happens to be working, he or she only gets—only gets—the higher of that which the Social Security will pay for him or her or the spouse but not both. So you've got somebody who's worked their life, contributed to the Social Security system, died early, didn't get one dime of retirement, and the money just goes away.

Doesn't it make sense to allow somebody to set aside some of their own money, if they so choose, in an account they call their own, and if they predecease or die early, there's an asset base to be able to pass on to a loved one, to help that loved one transition.

And finally, I don't know if you know this or not, but we have, at the Federal level, what's called a Thrift Savings Plan. In other words, this idea has already been used by

Federal employees. Members of Congress, Members of the Senate are allowed to set aside some of their own money in a conservative mix of bonds and stocks so they get a better rate of return. Now, in other words, this is—we're not inventing something new. For example, Federal employees can't take their money and put it in the lottery, or you can't take it to the racetrack. In other words, there's a prescribed way—a mix of bonds and stocks that is—that will allow you to get a better rate of return than your money in the system, without taking extraordinary risks.

In other words, there's go-bys; there's guidelines. And it's already happening. Doesn't it make sense for Members of Congress to give younger workers the opportunity to do the same thing with their money that they get to do in their retirement system? Frankly, if it's good enough for Federal workers and elected officials, putting aside some of your own money in a personal retirement account, it ought to be good enough for all workers in America.

So that's my thinking on the subject. I've got some other people up here who've been thinking about it too, and I'm going to start with Jeff Brown, Dr. Jeff Brown, Ph.D. Isn't that right?

**Dr. Jeffrey R. Brown.** That is correct, sir.

**The President.** So you are now a—

**Dr. Brown.** Professor. I'm a professor at the University of Illinois. [Applause] All right. Wouldn't think I was in Hawkeye country here. [Laughter]

**The President.** Big Ten country. [Laughter] Certain kind of loyalty throughout the conference.

**Dr. Brown.** And I've been studying Social Security now for about 10 years.

**The President.** I like to remind people, by the way, he's one of my—he's an adviser. So for the students here, take heart in this concept. He gets a Ph.D. I get Cs. [Laughter] I'm the President, and he's the adviser.

**Dr. Brown.** All those years of education.

**The President.** That's right. Keep rolling. You studied the issue.

**Dr. Brown.** Yes, so, you're absolutely right that Social Security faces very severe financial problems, and they start very soon, just about 12 years from now. Really they start earlier, 3 years from now when the baby

boomers start to retire and those surpluses that we're running start to dwindle down. Then they turn to deficits a few years later.

[At this point, Dr. Brown, assistant professor, Department of Finance, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL, made further remarks.]

**The President.** Yes, it's estimated, for example—if you're a younger person, listen carefully—that if nothing happens, if we wait and delay, if it's kind of the typical political response, just wait to the—you know, wait until 2017 to call people together, that in order to make sure that the system works, that your payroll taxes are going from 12.4 to 18 percent. Try that on, if you're working. That's not—by the way, that doesn't include Federal income taxes, State taxes, and local taxes.

And so now is the time—I think what Jeff is saying, now is the time for us to deal with this problem.

Now, again, I want to repeat, there's a couple of things about personal accounts that I think is important. One, it's just an optional plan. Shouldn't we give people the option of making the decision themselves? That seems like a reasonable approach for Government. Doesn't it say—doesn't it make sense for Government, people of both political parties to say, "If you think you can do a better job than we can with your money, here's an opportunity to do so." It's voluntary. I happen to be a person who actually trusts people. It's your money. I trust you with your own money. To me that's an attitude that Congress ought to take: We trust you with your own money.

Is that it, Professor? You did a fine job, as usual.

**Q.** Joe Studer and Jimmy Adams. Been married for how long? You got to speak in the mike.

**Joe Studer.** Sixteen years.

**Jimmy Adams.** Going on 16 years.

**The President.** Sixteen years—great. Got any kids?

**Mr. Studer.** Nine between us.

**The President.** Fantastic. Any of them here?

**Mr. Studer.** Yes, yes, Angela is right over there.

**The President.** Oh, there's Angela. Good.

**Mr. Studer.** My daughter-in-law is with her.

**The President.** I understand you're adoptive parents.

**Mrs. Adams.** Yes.

**The President.** Thanks for adopting. It is one of the greatest acts of love that a person can do. I appreciate you doing that.

**Mrs. Adams.** Can I mention that it's her 23d birthday today?

**The President.** Whose birthday?

**Mrs. Adams.** Angela's.

**The President.** Angela, would you like a little notoriety here? [Laughter] Mom just gave you some. Happy 23d birthday. And by the way, at the age of 23, you better hope that we permanently fix the Social Security system. [Laughter]

Anyway, thank you all for coming. Joe, you got some retirement income?

**Mr. Studer.** We both have retirement income, much thanks to the Federal Government. I was a Federal employee.

**The President.** Good, yes.

**Mr. Studer.** Started that career when I was 40 years old, did a career change—kind of like you. [Laughter] And I was able to, first of all, get an excellent retirement plan from my employer, which I'm now taking advantage of. And secondly, in the early eighties, we had two opportunities to put money aside. One was the IRA that I was able to contribute a total of \$6,000 to and watch it grow, and then lastly, the Thrift Savings Plan you're talking about is the option that we all had as Federal employees at that time—three choices. I contributed one third of my contribution, 12 percent of my wages, to each choice: conservative, semi-conservative, and the ever-risky stocks and bonds, the stocks in the stock market.

**The President.** Right, and how did you do over time?

**Mr. Studer.** My Thrift Savings Plan is approaching \$100,000.

**The President.** No, I'm not asking about that.

**Mr. Studer.** Oh.

**The President.** You're giving too much information here.

**Mr. Studer.** Oh, okay, okay. [Laughter]

**The President.** That's like asking a farmer—or a rancher how many cattle he's got. [Laughter] Was the rate of return decent on the money?

**Mr. Studer.** Excellent. And—but we've had our down years. It goes up and down.

**The President.** Sure. But over time—

**Mr. Studer.** It's been far better than Social Security—

**The President.** Yes.

**Mr. Studer.** —and far better than doing nothing.

**The President.** Yes. I talked to a person today who showed me her thrift savings account return at the restaurant there, and they had averaged about 6½ percent over time. There's a big difference between 6½ percent growing over time and the 1.8 percent the Government gets on your money over time. And that difference compounds a lot if you're a younger person. You start saving now at a 6½ percent rate, it grows, doesn't it?

**Mr. Studer.** Yes, it does.

**The President.** 100,000, that's—you brought it up, not me.

**Mr. Studer.** That's right. [Laughter] But I'm proud of it. It was one of the better decisions I made in my life. This was the—

**The President.** And let me ask you, for some people out there saying, "I don't think I've got the capacity to make an investment, to figure out what to do," was it a difficult, complex assignment?

**Mr. Studer.** Initially, it was kind of scary.

**The President.** Yes.

**Mr. Studer.** Yes, but—and I was—

**The President.** Looks like you've adjusted quite well.

**Mr. Studer.** Yes, we have. Yes, we have. [Laughter] And then very comfortable with the assignment. And people that didn't join at that time did join 2 years later when they discovered how beneficial it was.

**The President.** Yes. And Jinny, you're a—been in the school system. Thank you for teaching.

**Mrs. Adams.** Yes, I have. I've been a counselor in the Cedar Rapids School District for 29 years, and—[applause]. Thank you. Thank you.

**The President.** Are you getting Social Security at all?

**Mrs. Adams.** Yes, I am.

**The President.** Yes. Any doubt you're going to get the check?

**Mrs. Adams.** None. I'm over 55. I'm in that 55-plus-something group, and so I'm not worried.

**The President.** So am I. [Laughter]

**Mrs. Adams.** But I now have a retirement through the IPERS retirement system. And we're doing fine.

**The President.** Yes, the key is, is that people who are getting a Social Security check just got to understand, it's coming. It—you will get your check. The question is whether or not your children will.

**Mrs. Adams.** Yes, and that's why we're here, to help the situation for the young people. I think of the young teachers who are taking the places of those of us that have graduated from work, and so basically, we are here for them. We're here for our children, and we have 13 grandchildren.

**The President.** Thirteen grandchildren? Great.

**Mrs. Adams.** Yes, they are great.

**The President.** Yes, well, that's good. Grandchildren are great. You can always just pass them back to the parents if things get a little rough.

**Mrs. Adams.** That's right.

**Mr. Studer.** [Inaudible]

**The President.** Come by the house?

**Mrs. Adams.** Yes.

**Mr. Studer.** Come to the baptism Sunday.

**The President.** Oh, really, you've got a baptism Sunday. Congratulations. I won't be making it, however. [Laughter]

**Mr. Studer.** Just thought I'd ask.

**The President.** I don't think you want people going through magnetometers to the building. [Laughter] Anyway, I'm glad you all are here. Thank you.

Joe and Jinny are here as—to say loud and clear to the people of Iowa, "You're going to get your check if you're 55 and older." I know I've said that once, and I've said it—I'm going to keep saying it a lot. And it's important for people to hear it, because I understand how important the Social Security check is to a lot of people, a lot of people. The system has worked. Franklin Roosevelt was wise about setting up a safety net for retirement. The question is, do we have the will in the United States Congress to make

sure that safety net is available not for this generation, my generation, but for the generations coming up?

And we've got some of the generations coming up sitting right here, starting with Dennis Bogaards.

**Dennis Bogaards.** Mr. President.

**The President.** Dennis, welcome. What do you do for a living?

**Mr. Bogaards.** I'm a 33-year-old farmer from Pella.

**The President.** Farmer, that's good.

**Mr. Bogaards.** I've been farming since 1992 with my dad, and—[*applause*]. Thank you.

**The President.** Seems like there's a lot of farmers around this State.

**Mr. Bogaards.** Well, I would hope so.

**The President.** At least that's my experience.

[*Mr. Bogaards made further remarks.*]

**The President.** Yes, see, it's very interesting. You see a small-business man who talks about the fact that he is contributing into the system, wondering whether or not that which he's contributing into exists—will exist. He's—I presume you've heard of the shortfall that's coming your way.

**Mr. Bogaards.** Yes, and I want that money to be available to my son and daughter sitting over here with my wife. And that's very important in the farming operation, to be able to have that money if I pass away, like you said, to have that money, that it doesn't go away, that it's there for them if they want to continue that family farm on. That's very important.

**The President.** Right. We've got to get rid of the death tax, by the way, to make sure that the farm can go from one generation to the next. Right, Mr. Chairman? Yes.

Good. You making a living, by the way? Making a living on the farm?

**Mr. Bogaards.** You know, we're working as hard as we can, and this year doesn't look to be quite as good as last year was, but anything you can do for \$10 beans or \$5 corn would be great.

**The President.** I'll tell you what we can do. I'll tell you what we can do. We can sell those soybeans around the world, is what we

can do. We can make sure that others get these good Iowa soybeans.

I appreciate you coming. Isn't it interesting, here's a guy who farms the land, sitting up here with the President talking about his worries about a Social Security solvency. I mean, this issue is beginning to permeate. People, whether they've been on a tractor or anywhere else in society, are beginning to hear the message: We have a problem. And part of the strategy, by the way, is to spend a lot of time, and I'm—over the 60-day period when I got started, we're going to spend the time saying to people, "We have a problem," because guess what happens after that, once people figure out the problem. They start asking the questions to people like me and Grassley and Democrats in the Senate and the House, "What are you going to do about it?" See, once people understand there's a problem, the next question is, "How come you're not solving the problem?" And so here we've got a soybean farmer from Iowa sitting on the stage wondering whether or not there's the will to solve the problem.

**Mr. Bogaards.** Exactly. That's a big concern.

**The President.** Well, I appreciate you being here to lend your voice to this issue.

**Mr. Bogaards.** Thank you. And I just want to back up what Charles—what Senator Grassley said about you taking the leadership to do this. I—so many times we feel like the tough issues aren't addressed, and we just thank you so much for your leadership in this issue and many others.

**The President.** Well, thanks a lot. I appreciate you coming. Good luck on the farm.

**Mr. Bogaards.** Thank you.

**The President.** Lisa Loesch.

**Lisa Loesch.** Hello.

**The President.** Yes, ma'am. Hi. What do you do for a living?

**Mrs. Loesch.** I'm an RN.

**The President.** Good. By the way, this community college system has got a program to help—yes. Listen, there's fantastic programs in the community college system around America to take willing workers, people with good hearts, and train them to become RNs. Thanks for being an RN, and you're working at the hospital?

**Mrs. Loesch.** I'm working at St. Luke's Hospital, which was recently voted one of the top 100 hospitals in the Nation.

**The President.** Really?

**Mrs. Loesch.** Yes.

**The President.** Probably because of the nurses.

**Mrs. Loesch.** Probably. Very likely.

**The President.** That's good. Thanks. It's interesting that you would be sitting up here. Explain to me why—what's on your mind?

[Mrs. Loesch made further remarks.]

**The President.** Yes, it's interesting—I'm not going to tell you Lisa's age, but she's, like, not quite baby boomer but a little older than the man here. [Laughter] And people are beginning to understand that the promises that have been made to my generation may not be able to be kept. I think that's what you're saying. And your husband is an investment guy?

**Mrs. Loesch.** He owns his own financial firm, yes.

**The President.** Right. So he's used to stocks and bonds and all that?

**Mrs. Loesch.** He understands it all, yes.

**The President.** Yes. And the reason I bring that up is that—I mentioned this before, but there's this notion about only certain kind of people maybe have got the capacity to invest, watch their own money grow. I presume he works with people from all walks of life.

**Mrs. Loesch.** He does. And we have six children, and three of them are already investing. As soon as they start a job, they start investing.

**The President.** Really? That's smart, because it compounds. People understand compounding rate of interest. It grows. I mentioned the person making \$35,000, which if you allow that person to put a third of their payroll taxes—not all that much money to begin with, but because money grows and compounds over time, he ends up or she ends up with a \$250,000 nest egg. In other words, that's what the power of compounding rate of interest does. And it's something that we ought to afford younger workers. It makes a lot of sense to encourage people to save their own money.

You know what else I like? I presume your husband's business clients get the quarterly statements.

**Mrs. Loesch.** Yes.

**The President.** Doesn't that make sense, that in a retirement system that somebody opens up their quarterly statement to see how their own money is growing? It's your money to begin with. It might make people pay more attention to the decisions made in Washington, DC, about what we do with your money. But I like the idea of encouraging more people to become investors. And it's not all that difficult. Again, I repeat, these systems aren't going to allow you to go in the lottery. You can't take flyers. There's a prescribed group of bonds and stocks you can invest in, and you can tailor-make it to your own circumstances.

But I want to thank you for the philosophy you just outlined that says, "Why doesn't Government trust you with your own money? It's yours to begin with."

**Mrs. Loesch.** Thank you.

**The President.** Appreciate you coming, Lisa. You only got six kids?

**Mrs. Loesch.** Only.

**The President.** Wow. Any teenagers?

**Mrs. Loesch.** Five of them are teenagers; four of them are driving.

**The President.** Yes. So how come your hair isn't white like mine? [Laughter] Never mind.

**Mrs. Loesch.** Because it's dyed.

**The President.** Yes. [Laughter]

And we're going to end up here with Chuck Knudsen. Welcome.

**Chris Knudsen.** My name is Chris Knudsen.

**The President.** Yes—I was thinking about your brother, Chuck. [Laughter]

**Mr. Knudsen.** That's my dad, Chuck, actually.

**The President.** Chuck.

**Mr. Knudsen.** And he's over here with—

**The President.** Where is Chuck? Where are you? Oh, you had a terrible seat.

**Mr. Knudsen.** He's over there somewhere.

**The President.** I'm actually here with Chuck's son, Chris.

**Mr. Knudsen.** It's a pleasure to be here today.

**The President.** You're a student here?

**Mr. Knudsen.** I am a student here. I'm 20 years old. I'm a sophomore here at Kirkwood Community College—

**The President.** Great. Thank you.

**Mr. Knudsen.** —one of the finest community colleges in the Nation.

**The President.** There's a man looking for an A, right there. Good. Twenty years old?

**Mr. Knudsen.** Twenty years old.

**The President.** Yes, and so here you are talking to the President about Social Security.

**Mr. Knudsen.** I am.

**The President.** Why?

**Mr. Knudsen.** Why? Because my time outside of school is pretty much split between church and Scouts. I'm an elder in the First Presbyterian Church of Marion.

**The President.** Fabulous.

**Mr. Knudsen.** And the rest of my time is generally spent towards the Boy Scouts of America. I'm an Eagle Scout.

**The President.** Are you? Congratulations.

**Mr. Knudsen.** Thank you.

**The President.** Setting a good example. What's that got to do with Social Security?

**Mr. Knudsen.** Well, the last six summers I've worked at a Scout camp. I get a small check; it's not very large, but I do see the Social Security and the taxes taken off the top of those checks. And when I get those checks back, as I make more money each year, I continue to see more and more taken. And I tend to wonder where exactly it's going.

**The President.** Yes. Interesting question, isn't it? When you start seeing money taken out of your check and you start to hear we got a problem, and you start to wonder where the money is going. I'll tell you where it's going. See that red right there? That's where it's going, unless we do something about it right now.

**Mr. Knudsen.** Exactly.

**The President.** It's interesting, you know, when I was 20 years old, I wasn't worried about Social Security. I think of anybody else born around 1946, '47, '48—I don't remember being 20 years old wondering whether or not the Social Security system was solvent, because we thought it was, didn't we?

**Mr. Knudsen.** Exactly.

**The President.** You didn't know. You weren't there. [Laughter]

**Mr. Knudsen.** Well, I see what the future of Social Security is, and I start to wonder if, when I become 62, if the money is going to be there for me. The way the system is set up now, it's not going to be.

**The President.** Well, I appreciate that. You know, there's a survey of people Chris' age—not Chuck's age, Chris' age—that said they are more likely to see a UFO than get a Social Security check. [Laughter]

**Mr. Knudsen.** The way the system is set up, I tend to believe that.

**The President.** Yes. You know what's interesting about this younger generation of folks is that the investment culture has changed. If you think about it—401(k), IRAs, those didn't exist when we were growing up. People weren't used to have incentives to invest their own money. But it's changed. All through society, people are learning to invest their money. The system is designed for plans where people can watch and manage their own money. That's what's changed in our society, hasn't it?

**Mr. Knudsen.** I'd like to have the option to spend my money the way I would like to invest it.

**The President.** Yes.

**Mr. Knudsen.** I've been able to, through my dad, he showed me—kept me up to date on the family finances and things like that. And I feel that if I had some options with my own money, I could spend it wiser for myself than the Government has with Social Security.

**The President.** Yes, invest it wiser. So you won't be spending it until you retire.

**Mr. Knudsen.** Exactly.

**The President.** In other words, it's very important for people to understand, the nest egg you own is for—is to be a part of a retirement system. In other words, the Government is going to be able to afford something, and on top of that will be your own nest egg. It's a part of the retirement system. And that asset base that you build will not only help you in retirement, but if you so choose, you can leave it to whomever you want, which is, I think, a vital part of having a vibrant

society, that assets are passed from one generation to the next.

Good job.

**Mr. Knudsen.** Thank you.

**The President.** You want to have the final word, or you want me to?

**Mr. Knudsen.** I can go ahead and talk a little more if you would like. [Laughter] I think the other key thing that most people are forgetting is the fact that if I felt that I wasn't wise enough to invest my money and I wasn't confident in myself, I have the option not to accept the personal account and leave the system as it is and take the system. So I have the option of doing it if I care to or not.

**The President.** Precisely right. I appreciate you understanding that. I got the final word. [Laughter]

**Mr. Knudsen.** Okay.

**The President.** First of all, I want to thank our panelists for joining us. I hope you found this to be an educational discussion about a problem that we need to solve now. If you're over 55 years old, you'll get your check. I don't care what the propaganda says. I don't care what the pamphleteers say. I don't care what the ads say. You're going to get your check. Now, if you're a younger person here at this fine community college, you need to be asking the people in the United—you don't have to worry about your Senator and Congressman, but you need to be a part of people saying, "We have a problem. You all got elected for a reason. Now, what are you going to do about it to make sure the Social Security system is permanently solved."

Thanks for coming today. I appreciate your time. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:23 p.m. at Kirkwood Community College. In his remarks, he referred to Mick Starceвич, president, and Steve Ovel, executive director of governmental relations, Kirkwood Community College; Iowa State Senator Chuck Larson; Mayor Paul D. Pate of Cedar Rapids, IA; and former professional baseball player Rocky Colavito.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Trade Negotiations

March 30, 2005

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with section 2103(c)(2) of the Trade Act of 2002, I ask that the Congress extend trade promotion authority procedures for 2 years, and I enclose a report prepared by my Administration on trade negotiations conducted under those procedures.

Trade promotion authority is essential to expanding opportunities for American businesses, workers, and farmers. Working with the Congress, my Administration has completed trade agreements with 12 nations on 5 continents that will open a combined market of 124 million consumers for America's farmers, manufacturers, and service providers.

We must continue to pursue bilateral and regional agreements to open new markets, and we must complete negotiations in the World Trade Organization to reduce global barriers to trade. We will continue to enforce vigorously the trade laws so that American businesses and workers are competing on a level playing field.

Free and fair trade creates jobs, raises living standards, and lowers prices for families here at home. Trade agreements also deepen our partnerships with countries that want to trade in freedom. I look forward to the continued close cooperation with the Congress in pursuing these objectives.

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

**Remarks Prior to a Briefing on the Findings of the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction**

*March 31, 2005*

***Death of Theresa Marie Schiavo***

Today millions of Americans are saddened by the death of Terri Schiavo. Laura and I extend our condolences to Terri Schiavo's families. I appreciate the example of grace and dignity they have displayed at a difficult time. I urge all those who honor Terri Schiavo to continue to work to build a culture of life, where all Americans are welcomed and valued and protected, especially those who live at the mercy of others.

The essence of civilization is that the strong have a duty to protect the weak. In cases where there are serious doubts and questions, the presumption should be in the favor of life.

***Intelligence Capabilities***

The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. Since September the 11th, 2001, we've taken bold and vigorous steps to prevent further attacks and overcome emerging threats. We face a new and different kind of enemy. The threats today are unprecedented. The lives of our citizens are at stake. To protect them, we need the best intelligence possible, and we must stay ahead of constantly changing intelligence challenges.

So last year I issued an Executive order creating an independent Commission to look at America's intelligence capabilities, especially our intelligence about weapons of mass destruction. I asked two fine Americans to chair this Commission, Judge Laurence Silberman and former Senator Chuck Robb. They have done an excellent job. I appreciate your service to our country.

I also want to thank the other members of the Commission, Senator John McCain, Rick Levin, Harry Rowen, Walt Slocombe, Bill Studeman, Judge Patricia Wald, Chuck Vest, and Lloyd Cutler. I want to thank them for their hard work. They spent a lot of time on this project. I asked these distinguished individuals to give me an unvarnished look

at our intelligence community, and they have delivered.

This morning the Commission presented me with their recommendations, which are thoughtful and extremely significant. The central conclusion is one that I share: America's intelligence community needs fundamental change to enable us to successfully confront the threats of the 21st century.

My administration has taken steps consistent with the Commission's recommendations. In February, I named John Negroponte the first Director of National Intelligence, a post that was created to help ensure that our intelligence community works as a single, unified enterprise. It's important for Congress to move quickly on John's confirmation, because he'll have a key role in the continued reform and restructuring of intelligence capabilities.

Today I've directed Homeland Security Adviser Fran Townsend to oversee the interagency process, to review the Commission's findings, and to ensure that concrete action is taken. The Commission report delivers a sharp critique of the way intelligence has been collected and analyzed against some of the most difficult intelligence targets, especially Iraq.

To win the war on terror, we will correct what needs to be fixed and build on what the Commission calls solid intelligence successes. These include the uncovering of Libya's nuclear and missile programs. In Pakistan, our intelligence helped expose and shut down the world's most dangerous nuclear proliferation network. Where we have had success, the Commission reports we have seen innovative collection techniques and a fusion of interagency intelligence capabilities. We must work to replicate these successes in other areas.

The men and women of our intelligence community work hard, and the sacrifices they have made have helped protect America. And our Nation is grateful for their hard work. The work they're doing is critical. We need to prevent terrorists from getting their hands on the weapons of mass murder they would like to use against our citizens.

The work of our intelligence community is extremely difficult work. Every day, dangerous regimes are working to prevent us

from uncovering their programs and their possible relationships with terrorists. And the work our intelligence men and women do is, by nature, secret, which is why the American people never hear about many of their successes. I'm proud of the efforts of our intelligence workers, and I'm proud of their commitment to the security of our country. And the American people should be proud too.

And that's why this report is important. It will enable these fine men and women to do their jobs in better fashion, to be able to more likely accomplish their mission, which is to protect the American people. And that's why I'm grateful to the Commission for this hard work.

The President and his national security team must have intelligence that is timely and intelligence that is accurate. In their report today, the Commission points out that America needs to know much more about the weapons programs and intentions of our most dangerous adversaries. They have given us useful and important guidance that will help us transform our intelligence capabilities for the needs of a dangerous new century.

In other words, we need to adjust. We need to understand the threats and adjust our capabilities to meet those threats. We will work to give our intelligence professionals the tools they need. Our collection and analysis of intelligence will never be perfect, but in an age where our margin for error is getting smaller, in an age in which we are at war, the consequences of underestimating a threat could be tens of thousands of innocent lives. And my administration will continue to make intelligence reforms that will allow us to identify threats before they fully emerge so we can take effective action to protect the American people.

I'm grateful for your hard work. And now the Chairman of the Commission and the Co-Chairman of the Commission have agreed to answer your questions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:31 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## **Proclamation 7877—National Crime Victims' Rights Week, 2005**

*March 31, 2005*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

### **A Proclamation**

In proclaiming the first Victims' Rights Week in 1981, President Reagan said, "it is time all of us paid greater heed to the plight of victims." Since then, America has made great progress in treating crime victims with greater respect, meeting their needs, and providing them with help, hope, and healing. Each year, during National Crime Victims' Rights Week, we remember those who have lost their lives in violent crimes. We also renew our commitment to address the needs of victims and their families and to build public awareness of crime victims' rights.

The violent crime rate is at its lowest point in three decades. We must remain steadfast in our efforts to make America safer for all citizens and fairer for victims of crime. The Department of Justice has received historic levels of funding for programs to protect women and prosecute criminals. Family Justice Centers are helping local communities provide comprehensive services to victims of domestic crime and their loved ones. State and local law enforcement officials are continuing to serve the public and assist victims of crime. I signed into law the Justice for All Act of 2004, which expands DNA testing and enhances the scope and enforceability of crime victims' rights.

As we work to combat crime and support victims, we must also ensure the fairness and effectiveness of our criminal justice system. All 50 States and the Federal Government have passed important legal protections for victims of violent crime, and more than half the States have amended their constitutions to guarantee rights for victims. My Administration continues to support the bipartisan Crime Victims' Rights Amendment to the Constitution, which would safeguard basic rights for victims regarding their safety, notification of public proceedings involving the crime, and claims of restitution.

Across our Nation, individuals and organizations—including faith-based and community groups—are dedicated to defending and securing the rights of crime victims and providing hope and healing to those who hurt. Together, their commitment and compassion help ensure that our legal system stands up for the rights of victims and that our communities step forward to lend a hand to people in need. During this week, we honor their extraordinary work and renew our pledge to protect the rights of crime victims.

**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, do hereby proclaim April 10 through April 16, 2005, as National Crime Victims' Rights Week. I encourage all Americans to highlight and advance the cause of victims' rights in their communities.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., April 4, 2005]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 5.

**Memorandum on Assignment of Function To Submit a Report Relating to Millennium Challenge Corporation Activities**

*March 31, 2005*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Assignment of Function to Submit a Report Relating to Millennium Challenge Corporation Activities

Consistent with section 301 of title 3, United States Code, the function of the President under section 613 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2004 (Division D of Public Law 108–199) is assigned to the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State shall perform such function in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to withhold information the disclosure of which could impair foreign relations, national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties. Heads of departments and agencies shall, to the extent permitted by law, furnish to the Secretary information the Secretary requests to perform such function, in the format and on the schedule specified by the Secretary.

Any reference in this memorandum to the provision of any Act shall be deemed to include references to any hereafter-enacted provision of law that is the same or substantially the same as such provision.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:07 a.m., April 1, 2005]

NOTE: This memorandum was published in the *Federal Register* on April 4.

**Remarks on the Helping America's Youth Initiative**

*April 1, 2005*

**The President.** Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks. I thought you were going to say you couldn't give the speech because you were suffering from jetlag. [Laughter] Laura just got back from Afghanistan and reported that freedom is a beautiful thing, that society is changing because the people are free there.

And it's quite a job I have when you get to be introduced by your wife. I want to thank you all for coming. I'm a lucky man that Laura said yes when I asked her to marry me. She is a great mom, fabulous wife. She's doing a wonderful job as our First Lady. She is a tireless advocate for children in our country. She is a teacher. And you learn a thing or two when you marry a teacher. [Laughter] You learn to behave yourself—[laughter]—most of the time. [Laughter]

And you learn that a single soul can make a difference in a young person's life. That's

what you learn. As a matter of fact, that's what we're here to talk about today, how to help Americans realize the great promise of a single person's compassion and its ability to help save a soul. America can change one heart, one soul at a time.

And our job, frankly, all our jobs, is to find those who are willing to be a part of the solution and encourage them to help surround somebody who hurts with love. That's what we're here to talk about today.

First, I want to thank Mike Leavitt for serving as the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. One of the reasons he is here is this Department distributes a lot of Federal money, and I—you'll hear me talk about public policy that hopefully will encourage faith- and community-based programs to do a more—a better job of helping to save lives in our country.

Frank Wolf is with us. Frank, I'm honored you're here. Congressman Frank Wolf has been a leading advocate in the Congress for the faith-based and community-based initiatives. I appreciate you coming, Congressman. Glad to see you brought your daughter, Rebecca, with you. Frank, by the way, has been very instrumental in working in the Sudan to help bring peace to that troubled part of the world. I want to thank you for your efforts.

While I'm mentioning it, we met with youngsters who are being mentored, their mentors, and the directors of programs that have encouraged the mentoring to take place. Dan Johnson, the executive director of Kinship of Greater Minneapolis, is with us. Thanks for coming, Dan. Denise Williams, the vice president for programs, Big Brothers Big Sisters for the Capital Area, is with us. Mark Earley, the president of Prison Fellowship, is with us today. Appreciate you coming, Mark. Maureen Holla, the executive director of the Higher Achievement Program—Maureen, thank you very much.

Barbara—Barbara's been introduced once; I'll introduce her again. Barbara is a big name in my family. *[Laughter]* Thank you for being the head of this great school. We're honored to be here. I want to thank all the teachers who are here. I want to thank all the mentors who are here. I want to thank all the people

who care about the future of this country who are here.

Laura and I are thrilled to be here. I'm impressed by the results of the Higher Achievement Program. I think it's important if you're in my line of work, for example, to ask people, "What's happening? What are the results? Show me some progress." I don't have much time in this job, and so one of the things I try to do is to say, "Here's the goal, and how are we progressing toward this goal?"

And one of the interesting things about the Higher Achievement Program, they have got a good track record, good results. It shows what is possible when you focus on a goal-oriented, results-oriented approach to helping save lives. For 30 years—they've got a long history, by the way; this program has been in existence for 30 years—they've mentored middle school students. And that's an important group, by the way. If you're interested in trying to figure out something to do in America, find some middle school students who need some help. It is a very important age for loving adults to enter into a child's life. And this initiative—let me just say this, of the more than 300 youngsters who take place in this program per year, 95 percent go to college.

If you're interested in finding out what works, look at this program, because the results are clear. And I want to congratulate the visionaries involved with the program and those who are on the frontlines of making it work.

I also—we have the honor of meeting folks who mentor. I call them soldiers in the armies of compassion, people who are willing to take time out of their too-busy lives to help save a life. Such a person is Stacey French. For 2½ years, she has volunteered to tutor a seventh grader named Lexus Henderson, both of whom are here today. Stacey watched as Lexus turned from an inattentive student to one who is focused, to one who sets goals. I asked Lexus, I said, "You going to college?" Thirteen-year-old guy, by the way. He said, "Absolutely." He's even picked one out. He has set a goal. And Stacey is there to help him realize that goal. He wasn't very good in math. She helped focus on math. Math is now his favorite subject.

Here's a guy going to college as a result of the love of Stacey. Thank you all for coming. Please stand up.

Laura and I also met with some extraordinary young men and women who have faced some incredibly significant and great challenges in their life. Each of them has had a mother or father in prison. Each has had a volunteer mentor as well. And the caring presence of this adult, the soul who said, "I love you," has made a big difference in these children's lives. They have made a—the kids have made a tough decision to kind of resist peer pressure and focus on achieving results in schools and staying off drugs and making tough choices. And we're really proud of the accomplishments that you all have made and the example you have set.

One of those is Michaela Huberty, is with us today from Benjamin Mays Magnet School, St. Paul, Minnesota. She is the youngest of three children, and she's being raised by her mom. Her dad has been in and out of prison for her entire life. Fortunately, there's the Lutheran mentoring program—I just introduced the head of it—in Minneapolis that matched Michaela with Jennifer Kalenborn. She is a special needs teacher in St. Paul. Think about that. She's already helping children, and she wanted to do more.

She is—and they do crafts together, and they go to museums together, and they read together, and they talk on the phone together. She sets an example. Guess what Michaela wants to be when she grows up: a teacher. [*Laughter*] It's pretty interesting—not coincidental, of course. She's being loved by a teacher. She's being helped by a teacher. She herself wants to teach. One of the most important programs that we need to focus on is to—helping a child whose parent is or has been in prison. And I want to thank the Minneapolis program, and I want to thank Jennifer for being such a good soul. Welcome to you both. Thanks for coming. Let them stand up.

Jillian Antonucci is with us. She joined the Prison Fellowship Angel Tree Program. That's a program all—that exists in order to help a child whose parent may be or has been in prison. It's a great program, by the way.

She takes time out from attending Grove City College in Pennsylvania to mentor

Brianna Morris, whose father and mother have both been in prison. I asked her, I said, "Well, how did you get involved with the program?" She said, "The first thing is I prayed and asked for guidance from the Almighty." It's kind of an interesting way to become inspired, isn't it? Matter of fact, it is the basis of many faith-based programs; matter of fact, it's the basis of all faith-based programs.

Brianna was suffering from depression. But Jillian, as a result of her love and desire to help, has watched this young lady become someone who is laughing and more open, somebody who has set goals. Interestingly enough, the goal—she either wants to be a basketball player or a computer technician. If your jump shot doesn't work, go computers. [*Laughter*] But we want to thank you both for being here. Thank you for coming. Please stand up and be recognized for your good work. [*Applause*]

Finally, we met Vinnie Thomas. Some people become mentors because of what mentors have done for them in their lives. In other words, one of the interesting things about mentoring is it can create a chain of compassion over the course of people's lives. And Vinnie Thomas left home when he was 16, ended up in California struggling with drugs. And guess where he ended up? In prison. He was there for 3½ years. And while he was there, a mentor—I think he said two mentors, but one sticks out in my mind in particular is a mentor that was a businessperson, came and mentored Vinnie and gave him an airplane ticket to fly back home, said "If you need a problem [help], \* here's a house; here's a bed." In other words, it's probably more effective than a probation officer could be. Somebody said, "I care for you, Vinnie." Vinnie said he didn't have a family; he was lonely. He said this mentor helped him make sure that he didn't land back in jail. Guess what? Vinnie today is a Big Brother to Parry Elliott, who is with us as well.

Parry Elliott is a seventh grader, lives in a section of Washington known for gang violence. His dad is in prison right now. I asked Parry, I said, "How about college?" He said, "Absolutely. You don't have to worry about

\* White House correction.

me.” He said, “I’ve made my decision.” He’s accepted to the SEED School in Washington, DC, where 100 percent of the graduating students were accepted into college last year. Thanks to Big Brothers Big Sisters of the National Capital Area, their lives have been transformed.

Let me tell you something about Vinnie. This week, he was ordained a deacon at the Galilee Baptist Church. I guess I shouldn’t call him Vinnie; I should call him Deacon Thomas. [Laughter] As a matter of fact, I asked the deacon to offer a prayer after our gathering. I was hoping I would be the recipient of the first prayer that the newly ordained deacon would offer. I think I might have been.

**Vincent Thomas.** You were.

**The President.** Well, that’s good. [Laughter] Let me just say you responded to the pressure quite well. [Laughter] It’s an honor to welcome Deacon Thomas and Parry with us today. Thank you all for coming.

I’m proud of these mentors; we’re proud of you all who mentor as well. Anybody listening out there is interested in how to serve the country, one good way is to become a mentor. We talked to the program directors. I said, “What are your bottlenecks? Where do you need help?” They need help in matching lost souls with somebody who loves. And so spread the word. I’m trying to spread it right now through that camera. [Laughter] But if you want to serve America, become a mentor.

And there are ways to do so. Plenty of access to the Internet—[usafreedomcorps.gov](http://usafreedomcorps.gov) is one way to figure out a mentoring program close to you that is looking for help. The amazing thing is, is that all this happens without Government. There’s success stories like the four we just heard all across America, because there are a lot of people who are saying, “What can I do? How can I help? What do I need to do to make sure opportunity is available to all people?”

Now, Government has got a role to play, in my judgment. I think there’s a vital role for Government to play. But first we’ve got to understand the limitations of Government. Government can do a lot of things, but one of the things Government is not really good at is love. It can hand out money, but it can’t

put hope in a person’s heart. It can’t serve to inspire a person to set goals like going to college. But what Government can do is to empower people who have heard the call to love a neighbor, and that’s what Government should do, in my judgment. Government should be an advocate of faith-based and community-based programs, not an impediment [impediment]<sup>o</sup> to faith-based programs. Government ought to be not a roadblock.

So we’re committed to making Government an effective partner for those bringing hope to harsh places. In the State of the Union this year, I announced the Helping America’s Youth Initiative that’s going to be led by Laura. She talked about it. She’ll be focusing on three key areas vital to helping young people succeed, family, school, and community.

This fall, she’s—as she mentioned, she’s going to be convening a White House conference that will bring researchers and policy experts and educators and parents and community leaders together. They will discuss ways and strategies to help children avoid drugs, alcohol, violence, early sexual activity, ways to help people build successful lives.

As part of Helping America’s Youth Initiative, we’ve proposed a new \$150 million effort to discourage gangs, to encourage faith-based and community-based organizations to provide alternatives to gangs. I can’t think of a better group of people to rally and inspire, to offset the lure of a gang, than somebody who has heard a universal call to love a neighbor just like they’d like to be loved themselves.

I’m really excited about Laura’s initiative. I urge Congress to support programs that will make this initiative viable, initiatives such as programs to help strengthen marriages, a responsible fatherhood initiative that would support community- and faith-based organizations to help fathers stay involved in their children’s lives, a healthy marriage initiative to support research on the best ways to keep marriages strong. Those seem like reasonable programs if we’re all aiming to try to make this society as strong a society as possible.

<sup>o</sup> White House correction.

There are over 2 million children in America with at least one parent in prison. That is a problem that we must address, and the problem is, is that if your dad or mother is in prison, you're likely to end up there yourself without love and compassion in your life. That's a fact.

And so one of the initiatives that I called upon Congress to fund was the initiative to help faith-based and community organizations to recruit enough mentors to save the lives of 100,000 children whose parent may be in prison. It's a vital initiative; it's an important initiative. Last year we gave out \$55 million in grants that had been awarded to 221 organizations. There is still work to be done. We're just starting.

I urge those of you involved in the Faith-and Community-Based Initiative to set up programs to mentor a child whose parent may be in prison. It is a vital contribution to our country that you can make. It's an important part of keeping this country a hopeful place for all. We'll have more money available in the budgets coming out, but what we can't do is we can't buy compassion and love. It's up to those at the community level to take advantage of the funding available. It's up to you to go out and help recruit. I can call people to service and will continue to do so. A patriotic way to serve America is to mentor a child whose parent may be in prison. But I encourage the social entrepreneurs in America to funnel resources and efforts and energy toward this vital program.

The faith-based program is one that is going to be—remain a constant part of my administration. Obviously, there's some limitations on the faith program. You can't take Federal money to proselytize. You can't take Federal money and discriminate against somebody based upon religion. In other words, if you're an alcohol and drug rehabilitation program and you happen to be associated with the Methodist church, you can't say only Methodists who are drunk can come here. You got to say, "All drunks are able to come here." [*Laughter*] In other words, there is some limitations. There are limitations to how this Federal money can be used.

But one of the limitations should not be based upon the fact that you're a faith-based program. In other words, we strongly believe

at the Federal level that Federal money ought to be accessible on an equal playing field, level playing field to faith-based programs.

Jim Towe runs an office in my—runs an office there at the White House. See, I ask Towe all the time, I say, "How much money are we getting out the door?" It's one thing to talk the Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative; another thing is actually to make sure money is available. And he reported to me last year, \$2 billion was accessed by the faith community. And that's good. That's a good start. We spend a lot more than 2 billion a year.

The whole goal, see, is to focus on results, not on process. Those of us in Washington, we ought to say, "Are we saving lives? Are we getting enough mentors in people's lives? Are we helping enough drunks get off alcohol? Are we helping enough addicts get off drugs?" That's what we ought to be asking. And we ought to recognize that in programs that exist because they've heard a call to love a neighbor, you can find great results. And so this Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative is a results-oriented approach that'll protect the church and—the separation of church and state but, at the same time, wisely uses taxpayers' money so that we can achieve important social objectives.

For those of you involved in the faith and community programs, I want to say thank you for your efforts. You've got a friend and ally in the Federal Government now.

Part of making sure you can do your job is to make sure regulations don't stand in the way of doing your job. Congress needs to make sure that faith-based groups are not forced to give up their right to hire people of their own faith as a price for competing for Federal money. I'm pleased that the House voted a month ago to protect the civil rights of faith-based groups. I urge the Senate to do the same when it considers welfare reform and job training legislation this year.

We're beginning to change the culture here in Washington. There's a more accepting attitude toward the role that faith-based and community-based programs can play in helping cure social ills and helping to shine a light into some of the dark places in our country.

In order to make sure that we continue to stay focused on this initiative and to be—and to succeed, I've set up 10 faith-based offices in 10 agencies, Federal agencies. In other words, there's got to be some accountability. I want there to be a presence in these Federal bureaucracies. I want somebody in there agitating for fairness, understanding the great hope of this initiative.

In 2003, grants to faith-based programs had gone up by 20 percent, and what's important for you to understand is that all the grant money hasn't just gone to the established faith providers, like the Salvation Army, which has done a fantastic job, or Catholic Charities, which has done a fantastic job in America. But I want to make sure that social entrepreneurs, large and small, had access to Federal money. In other words, we want to make sure that the program reaches some of the most lonely corners in America, that we touch both large and small providers. And we're making progress. And I'm asking Towey all the time, "Are we reaching new programs? Are we making a difference in other neighborhoods? Are we making sure that this has a broad reach throughout America?" And I'm proud to report that thousands of small groups, tiny grassroots organizations, are being touched by this initiative, and that's important.

Let me tell you why I feel so strongly about this initiative, because I understand the true strength of America lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens. Interestingly enough, I wasn't the first person to recognize this, nor will I be the last. De Tocqueville, fine fellow from France, came to the United States in the 1830s. And he studied what made America unique. And what he found was, the uniqueness of America then was their eagerness to come together to form associations to enable people to serve a cause greater than themselves. Many of those associations existed because of religion; a lot of them didn't. But there was this great desire for Americans to voluntarily associate in order to help realize an ambition deep within our soul, and that is to make our country a better place and, at the same time, make ourself a better person by working to help somebody who hurts. He recognized, de Tocqueville recognized that a strength—that

that was our strength then. It's very important for those of us in public policy to recognize that it is our strength today.

And so I want to thank you all for being a soldier in the army of compassion, some of you privates, some of you sergeants, some of you generals, all soldiers, bound together by the great desire to love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself.

Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to work with our faith- and community-based programs to save America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

Thanks for coming today. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10:55 a.m. at Paul Public Charter School. In his remarks, he referred to Barbara Nophlin, head of school, Paul Public Charter School. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

### **Proclamation 7878—National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 2005**

*April 1, 2005*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Our Nation has a responsibility to build a safe and nurturing society so that our young people can realize their full potential. During National Child Abuse Prevention Month, we renew our commitment to preventing child abuse and rededicate ourselves to working together to ensure that all children can have a bright and hopeful future.

Creating a protective environment for our young people requires the shared commitment of individuals, families, and faith-based and community organizations. Parents and family members are the first and most important influence in a child's life. A safe and stable family can provide children with a foundation of love and security that encourages positive growth and development. Federal, State, and local government officials can also improve the lives of our young people by doing all they can to keep children safe from harm.

Together, we can protect our future generations so that they can realize the opportunities of our Nation. By providing help and hope to our young people, we will build a better and more compassionate world for our children and grandchildren.

**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, do hereby proclaim April 2005 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. I encourage all Americans to protect our children from abuse and neglect and to help ensure that every child can grow up in a secure and loving environment.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this first day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:49 a.m., April 4, 2005]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 5.

### **Proclamation 7879—National Donate Life Month, 2005**

*April 1, 2005*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

America's health care system is the best in the world. We are blessed with skilled doctors and medical professionals, advances in technology, and countless organ, tissue, and bone marrow donors who help save lives. During National Donate Life Month, we continue to work to raise donation awareness, help people get the information they need to become donors, and recognize those who have chosen to donate.

Organ donors share the precious gift of life with others and demonstrate the compassionate spirit of our Nation. Most people are eligible to donate organs, tissue, or bone marrow. They can join the donor registry in

their State, indicate donations on their driver's license, or complete and carry a donor card. Through these measures, Americans help others in need to live longer and healthier lives.

My Administration remains committed to increasing organ and tissue donation. Over the past 4 years, more than 10,500 organizations have joined the Department of Health and Human Services' "Gift of Life Donation Initiative" and made donation information available to their employees, associates, and members. My fiscal year 2006 budget proposal includes \$23 million for donation and transplant services at HHS and an additional \$23 million for the National Bone Marrow Donor Registry. These programs will help increase donation rates, treat patients in need, and strengthen efforts to find suitable bone marrow donors.

During National Donate Life Month, I join our citizens in honoring donors and their families. The generosity of these individuals reflects the great character of our country and sets a fine example for all Americans.

**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, do hereby proclaim April 2005 as National Donate Life Month. I urge health care professionals, volunteers, educators, government agencies, and private organizations to help raise awareness of the need for organ and tissue donors across our Nation.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this first day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:49 a.m., April 4, 2005]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 5.

**Proclamation 7880—National  
Former Prisoner of War Recognition  
Day, 2005**

*April 1, 2005*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

**A Proclamation**

From the time of our Nation's founding, members of our military have built a tradition of honorable and faithful service. As they fought to protect our security and defend our ideals, some endured the extreme hardship of enemy captivity. On National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, we remember those courageous individuals taken prisoner while defending our country, and we honor their extraordinary sacrifices.

America's former prisoners of war are among our Nation's bravest heroes. Under the worst conditions, they fought fiercely and served with honor, and they continue to inspire generations with their strength and perseverance. In serving our Nation, each demonstrated personal courage, love of country, and devotion to duty. Because of their sacrifices, and the selflessness and heroism of all who have served in our Armed Forces, millions of people now live in freedom, and America remains the greatest force for good on Earth. On this day, we honor their role in protecting our country and the liberty of mankind.

Today, our brave men and women in uniform carry on their legacy—unrelenting in battle, unwavering in loyalty, and unmatched in decency. As we pursue victory in the war on terror, I join all Americans in expressing our deepest gratitude to every service member who has been a prisoner of war and to their families.

**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, do hereby proclaim April 9, 2005, as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I call upon the people of the United States to join me in remembering former American prisoners of war by honoring their sacrifices. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and pri-

vate organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this first day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:49 a.m., April 4, 2005]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 5.

**Executive Order 13375—  
Amendment to Executive Order  
13295 Relating to Certain Influenza  
Viruses and Quarantinable  
Communicable Diseases**

*April 1, 2005*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 361(b) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 264(b)), it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1.** Based upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Surgeon General, and for the purpose set forth in section 1 of Executive Order 13295 of April 4, 2003, section 1 of such order is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new subsection:

“(c) Influenza caused by novel or reemerged influenza viruses that are causing, or have the potential to cause, a pandemic.”.

**Sec. 2.** This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees or agents, or any other person.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
April 1, 2005.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:49 a.m., April 4, 2005]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 5.

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### **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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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.

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#### **March 26**

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing.

#### **March 27**

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Fort Hood, TX, where they attended an Easter Sunday service at the 4th Infantry Division Memorial Chapel. Later, they returned to the Bush Ranch, where they celebrated Easter with family members.

#### **March 28**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

Later in the afternoon, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the President participated in a celebration of Greek Independence Day.

During the day, the President had a briefing on the earthquake that struck off the coast of Indonesia earlier in the day.

#### **March 29**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President Nestor Kirchner of Argentina to discuss the Summit of the Americas to be held in November and other issues.

Later in the morning, in the Oval Office, the President met with a group of Iraqi citizens who live in the U.S. and who voted in the Iraqi elections in January.

In the afternoon, the President had a briefing on the report by the Commission on the

Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction to be released officially on March 31.

The President announced his intention to nominate Rachel Brand to be Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Policy, Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate Suzanne C. DeFrancis to be Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services for Public Affairs.

The President announced his intention to nominate Alice S. Fisher to be Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate Philip J. Perry to be General Counsel at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to nominate Regina B. Schofield to be Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael Dolan and Robert M. Duncan to be members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

#### **March 30**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He also had a telephone conversation with Mrs. Bush, who was returning from a visit to Afghanistan.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Cedar Rapids, IA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Al Smith, Jr.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared an emergency in New Hampshire and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by record and/or near-record snow on January 22–23.

The President declared an emergency in New Hampshire and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by record snow on February 10–11.

#### **March 31**

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister

Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government to discuss the situation in Iraq. He then had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, in the Cabinet Room, the President met with members of the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, who presented him with their official report. Later, in the Situation Room, he met with members of his Cabinet whose Departments may be affected by the Commission's report.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with Vice President Dick Cheney. He then met with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

In the evening, in the Residence, the President received a briefing from White House Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card, Jr., on the health of Pope John Paul II.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gordon R. England to be Deputy Secretary of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eric S. Edelman to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

### ***April 1***

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with USA WEEKEND magazine's Make a Difference Day outstanding teen volunteer winners.

Later in the morning, the President, Mrs. Bush, and Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt went to the Paul Public Charter School, where they met with participants of a mentoring program for children of prisoners.

During the day, the President received updates on the health of Pope John Paul II.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ben S. Bernanke to be a member of the Council of Economic Advisers and, upon confirmation, to designate him as Chairman.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kenneth J. Krieg to be Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics.

The President announced his intention to nominate David A. Sampson to be Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to designate Rhonda Keenum as Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as Governors of the Board of Governors of the American National Red Cross: Michael Chertoff; Carlos M. Gutierrez; Michael O. Leavitt; Jim Nicholson; Condoleezza Rice; and Margaret Spellings.

The President announced his intention to appoint Gerald A. Jemison, Mark A. Sadd, and John G. Williams III as members of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Board of Directors of the Valles Caldera Trust: John T. Caid; James R. Gosz; Tracy Hephner; and Raymond Loretto.

The President announced his intention to appoint James Balsiger as a Commissioner of the U.S. Commissioners on the International Pacific Halibut Commission and as the U.S. Commissioner on the U.S. Section of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission.

The President announced his recess appointments of the following individuals as members of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission: Anthony J. Principi (Chairman); James H. Bilbray; Philip Coyle; Adm. Harold W. Gehman, Jr., USN (Ret.); Brig. Gen. Sue Ellen Turner, USAF (Ret.); James V. Hansen; Gen. James T. Hill, USA (Ret.); Samuel Knox Skinner; and Gen. Lloyd Warren Newton, USAF (Ret.).

The President announced his recess appointment of Michael W. Wynne as Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics.

The President declared a major disaster in Maine and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by record and/or near-record snow on March 9.

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## **Nominations Submitted to the Senate**

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NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

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## **Checklist of White House Press Releases**

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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 March 29***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

### ***Released March 30***

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statements by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to New Hampshire

### ***Released March 31***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Transcript of a press briefing by Judge Laurence H. Silberman and former Senator Charles A. Robb on the findings of the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction

Overview of report and transmittal letter from the Commission on the Intelligence Ca-

pabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction

Statement by the Press Secretary extending the President's congratulations to Paul D. Wolfowitz on being selected as the next President of the World Bank

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1270

### ***Released April 1***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Maine

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## **Acts Approved by the President**

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### ***Approved March 25 \****

H.R. 1160 / Public Law 109-4  
Welfare Reform Extension Act of 2005

S. 384 / Public Law 109-5  
To extend the existence of the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Group for 2 years

### ***Approved March 31***

H.R. 1270 / Public Law 109-6  
To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund financing rate

\* These Public Laws were not received in time for inclusion in the appropriate issue.







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