

they continue their work to establish a stable, peaceful, and democratic Iraq.

**Statement on House of Representatives Passage of a Budget Framework Resolution**

*April 28, 2005*

I applaud the House for passing a budget framework that protects America, helps economic growth, funds our priorities, and keeps us on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009. This is a responsible budget that reins in spending to limits not seen in years. I appreciate the Members of Congress in the House and the Senate who worked hard to produce this agreement and who support its passage. It is not the Government's money that gets spent in Washington, DC. It is the people's money, and taxpayer dollars must be spent wisely or not spent at all.

**Proclamation 7890—National Charter Schools Week, 2005**

*April 28, 2005*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

Strong schools are the building blocks of a prosperous and hopeful country. To ensure that all our children receive the education they need to succeed, schools must be innovative, accountable, and committed to student achievement. The charter school movement was founded on these principles and has played an important role in expanding educational choices in America. This week, we highlight the importance of charter schools and recognize their contributions to American education.

Charter schools are unique because they are public schools operating under a contract from a public agency. In exchange for increased flexibility in teaching methods and curricula, these schools promise to meet strict accountability standards designed to improve student performance. Four hundred new charter schools opened in 32 states for the 2004–2005 school year, and there are nearly 3,400 charter schools serving almost

one million children in America. These institutions have provided a valuable alternative to families throughout the country.

My Administration is committed to advancing public education in America. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is bringing increased accountability to our schools. Test scores are rising, and the achievement gap for minority students is closing. Our continued strong commitment to this legislation is ensuring that parents have greater flexibility when deciding on how best to educate their children. To support and enhance school choice, I have proposed \$219 million for Charter School Grants and \$37 million for Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities. I have also called for \$50 million in new funding for the Choice Incentive Fund to support development of innovative school-choice programs.

We must continue to demand better results from our schools so that every high school diploma represents a significant level of educational achievement and all graduates are armed with the tools to succeed in the 21st Century. I commend the teachers and administrators of charter schools and all educators who are providing innovative alternatives that prepare our children for a bright and successful future.

**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 May 1 through 7, 2005, as National Charter Schools Week. I call on parents of charter school students and all those involved with charter schools to share their success stories and help Americans learn more about the important work of these institutions.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth 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**

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NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 3.

## The President's News Conference

April 28, 2005

**The President.** Good evening. Tonight I will discuss two vital priorities for the American people, and then I'd be glad to answer some of your questions.

Millions of American families and small businesses are hurting because of higher gasoline prices. My administration is doing everything we can to make gasoline more affordable. In the near term, we will continue to encourage oil-producing nations to maximize their production. Here at home, we'll protect consumers. There will be no price gouging at gas pumps in America.

We must address the root causes that are driving up gas prices. Over the past decade, America's energy consumption has been growing about 40 times faster than our energy production. That means we're relying more on energy produced abroad.

To reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy, we must take four key steps. First, we must better use technology to become better conservers of energy. Secondly, we must find innovative and environmentally sensitive ways to make the most of our existing energy resources, including oil, natural gas, coal, and safe, clean nuclear power. Third, we must develop promising new sources of energy, such as hydrogen or ethanol or biodiesel. Fourth, we must help growing energy consumers overseas like China and India apply new technologies to use energy more efficiently and reduce global demand of fossil fuels.

I applaud the House for passing a good energy bill. Now the Senate needs to act on this urgent priority. American consumers have waited long enough. To help reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy, Congress needs to get an energy bill to my desk by this summer so I can sign it into law.

Congress also needs to address the challenges facing Social Security. I've traveled the country to talk with the American people. They understand that Social Security is headed for serious financial trouble, and they expect their leaders in Washington to address the problem.

Social Security worked fine during the last century, but the math has changed. A generation of baby boomers is getting ready to retire. I happen to be one of them. Today, there are about 40 million retirees receiving benefits. By the time all the baby boomers have retired, there will be more than 72 million retirees drawing Social Security benefits. Baby boomers will be living longer and collecting benefits over long retirements than previous generations. And Congress has ensured that their benefits will rise faster than the rate of inflation.

In other words, there's a lot of us getting ready to retire who will be living longer and receiving greater benefits than the previous generation. And to compound the problem, there are fewer people paying into the system. In 1950, there were 16 workers for every beneficiary; today, there are 3.3 workers for every beneficiary; soon there will be 2 workers for every beneficiary.

These changes have put Social Security on the path to bankruptcy. When the baby boomers start retiring in 3 years, Social Security will start heading toward the red. In 2017, the system will start paying out more in benefits than it collects in payroll taxes. Every year after that, the shortfall will get worse, and by 2041, Social Security will be bankrupt.

Franklin Roosevelt did a wonderful thing when he created Social Security. The system has meant a lot for a lot of people. Social Security has provided a safety net that has provided dignity and peace of mind for millions of Americans in their retirement. Yet there's a hole in the safety net because Congresses have made promises it cannot keep for a younger generation.

As we fix Social Security, some things won't change: Seniors and people with disabilities will get their checks; all Americans born before 1950 will receive the full benefits.

Our duty to save Social Security begins with making the system permanently solvent, but our duty does not end there. We also have a responsibility to improve Social Security by directing extra help to those most in need and by making it a better deal for younger workers.