

leaders, for making right choices, for setting high standards, for setting the example, and for serving the communities in which you live. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:54 p.m. in Eisenhower Auditorium at Pennsylvania State University. In his remarks, he referred to Graham Spanier, president, and Joe Paterno, head football coach, Pennsylvania State University; Gov. Edward G. Rendell of Pennsylvania; and Robert C. Pozen, former member, President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Thomas B. Griffith as a United States Appeals Court Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit

June 14, 2005

I commend the Senate for confirming Tom Griffith to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Tom is an accomplished and experienced lawyer who will bring a broad range of legal experience to the court. He has served in the important post of Senate Legal Counsel, as general counsel at a major university, and in private practice. I look forward to the Senate's prompt consideration and up-or-down votes for my other judicial nominees.

Remarks at the 2005 President's Dinner

June 14, 2005

Thank you all for coming. Thank you for the warm reception. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. It's nice to have dinner with a group of friends. I appreciate you all coming here. This is a very important dinner because, through your generosity, we're going to keep control of the Senate and the House, and America will be better off for it.

I really appreciate you being here. I am sorry that the First Lady is not here. She sends her love. Generally when I say that, people groan, and I take it to mean they wish she'd have come and not me. I understand

that. I'll tell you something about Laura. She's quite the comedian, quite the diplomat. She's a heck of a First Lady and a great wife and mom. I love her dearly.

I want to thank Senator Lamar Alexander for his leadership on this incredibly successful dinner. I appreciate Speaker Denny Hastert. He is one fine man. He's a great Speaker of the House. And through your generosity, he's going to stay Speaker of the House. I want to thank the majority leader of the United States Senate, Bill Frist. He too is a great leader, and I appreciate calling him friend.

I want to thank Senator Elizabeth Dole, who is the NRSC chairman; Congressman Tom Reynolds, the NRCC chairman. Those are initials for, like, let's raise money and get the Senate in Republican—keep the Senate in Republican hands and House in Republican hands. Thank you for supporting these causes.

I want to thank the Members of the Senate and Congress for working so hard. I want to thank the Members of the—all the Members of the Congress who've joined us tonight. I appreciate the members of my Cabinet who are here.

I want to pay special tribute to the Republican National Committee chairman, Ken Mehlman, for the fantastic job he's doing on reaching out to people from all walks of life. I want to thank the President's Dinner leadership, especially Ken Thompson and his wife, Kathylee, for the fantastic job you all have done and everybody up here has done. I want to thank the Duke Ellington School of the Arts Show Choir for being here today.

I'm proud to be the head of a party that has a positive and hopeful and optimistic vision for every single person who lives in this country. And I'm proud to be a head of a party that is driving the debate on all the key domestic and foreign policy issues. Because of our achievements, the American people see us as the party of reform and optimism and results, the party that is moving this Nation forward.

All of us in Washington have a duty to the people who sent us here. Political parties can take one of two approaches. One approach is to lead, to focus on the people's business,

to take on the tough problems. And that is exactly what our party's done.

The other approach is to simply do nothing, to delay solutions, obstruct progress, refuse to take responsibility. Members of the other party have worked with us to achieve important reforms on some issues. Yet, too often, their leadership prefers to block the ideas of others. We hear "no" to making tax relief permanent. We hear "no" to Social Security reform. We hear "no" to confirming Federal judges. We hear "no" to a highly qualified U.N. Ambassador. We hear "no" to medical liability reform. On issue after issue, they stand for nothing except obstruction, and this is not leadership. It is the philosophy of the stop sign, the agenda of the roadblock, and our country and our children deserve better.

Political parties that choose the path of obstruction will not gain the trust of the American people. If leaders of the other party have innovative ideas, let's hear them. But if they have no ideas or policies except obstruction, they should step aside and let others lead.

We're a party that's gotten things done. Because we acted to pass the largest tax relief in a generation, our economy is growing again. We've created more than 3.5 million new jobs during the last 2 years. More Americans are working today than ever before in our Nation's history.

To keep this economy growing and creating jobs, we need to make the tax relief permanent. We need to get rid of the death tax forever. And we can do something else about taxes. I've appointed a bipartisan panel to examine our incoherent, out-of-date Tax Code. When their recommendations are delivered, I'm looking forward to working with the United States Congress to give this Nation a Tax Code that is progrowth, easy to understand, and fair to all.

Our party is the party of economic growth, and our party is the party of spending restraint. I've submitted the first budget to actually cut nonsecurity discretionary spending since Ronald Reagan was the President. Now the Congress needs to act to hold nondiscretionary spending below last year's level. The budget we submitted adheres to an interesting principle. It says taxpayers' money should be spent wisely or not spent at all.

We need to have a fiscally responsible highway bill that modernizes our roads and bridges and improves safety and creates jobs. We're on our way to cutting this deficit in half in 5 years, and I want to thank the Members of Congress for holding the line and doing what's right for the American taxpayer.

In order to make sure this economy grows, we need an energy bill. Four years ago, I presented Congress with a comprehensive energy strategy that encourages conservation, renewable sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel, that says we can use nuclear energy in a clean way, that recognizes the need to spend money on clean coal technology. It's an energy plan that will make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. For the sake of national security, and for the sake of economic security, Congress needs to get a bill to my desk before the August recess.

We're proudly the party of free and fair trade. During my administration and thanks to the good works of Congress, we've opened up markets for millions of consumers of U.S. products. And now we have an opportunity to continue to open up new markets with CAFTA, the Central American and Dominican Republic Free Trade act. Right now most of the goods coming from the Central American countries enter into our country duty-free. Yet our goods are not received in their countries duty-free. For the sake of free trade, for the sake of fair trade, for the sake of good jobs, for the sake of promoting young democracies in Central America, Congress must pass CAFTA.

Ours is the party of the entrepreneur and small business. Ours is the party of litigation reform. We're the party that continues to free our entrepreneurs from needless regulations and protect honest job creators from junk lawsuits. I applaud the Speaker and the leader for getting bipartisan class-action reform and bankruptcy reform through the Congress. Now we need asbestos litigation reform. And to stop junk lawsuits that are running good doctors out of practice and running up the cost of medicine, we need Federal medical liability reform.

Ours is the party that challenges the soft bigotry of low expectations, that worked to stop the practice of just shuffling kids through school, grade after grade, without

them being able to read and write. Ours is the party that set high standards, believes in local control of schools, and insists that every child learn to read and write, so no child is left behind in America.

We set a clear agenda to make health care more affordable and to give American families greater access to coverage and more control over their health decisions. In 2003, we strengthened Medicare by giving seniors more choices and adding a prescription drug benefit. We have kept our commitment to our Nation's seniors, and now we must move forward with more community health centers to help the poor, improved health information technology, expanded health savings accounts and association health plans, so that small businesses can pool risk and buy insurance at the same discount that big companies are able to do.

Ours is the party that set the goal to encourage ownership in America. We want more people owning their own business. I'm proud to report more people own a home than ever before in our Nation's history, and more minority families are owning a home today than ever before.

We need to expand ownership to our retirement system. Recently, I've been spending time talking about an important issue, and that's Social Security reform. And the reason I have is because I believe the job of the President is to confront problems and not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. We've got a problem when it comes to Social Security. No, you don't have a problem if you're getting your check now or if you were born prior to 1950. You'll get your check. The problem is for a younger generation of Americans who are paying payroll taxes or getting ready to pay payroll taxes into a system that is going broke.

Let me give you the math right quick, let you know why I'm talking about it all across the country. There's a lot of us getting ready to retire. We're called baby boomers. As a matter of fact, my retirement age is 2008—*[laughter]*—quite convenient. There are about 73 million baby boomers getting ready to retire. There are 40 million people retired today; another 33 million will be retired when the baby boomers fully retire. And we're living longer, and we've been promised

greater benefits by Congress. And the real problem is there's fewer people paying into the system. Today, there's 3.3 workers per beneficiary. Soon, there will be two workers per beneficiary. In 2017, the system goes into the red. In 2027, it's \$200 billion short. In 2041, it's bankrupt.

It is not right to sit here in Washington, DC, knowing the system is going bankrupt for younger Americans and not do anything about it. So I'm going to keep talking about it and keep putting ideas out. I've laid out some plans that would nearly fix all of the Social Security problem.

I'll tell you another idea we need to do is we need to give workers the option that Congress has given itself, and that is to be able to take some of their own money, some of their own payroll taxes and set it aside in a personal savings account they call their own, a personal savings account that will let them earn a better rate of return on their money, a personal savings account they can leave to whomever they want, a personal savings account the Government cannot take away or spend on special programs.

Ours is the party that believes in ownership. We want to extend the so-called investor class to all walks of life. We believe everybody should have an asset they can call their own. And we have a fantastic opportunity to strengthen and save Social Security for a generation of Americans to come and to give more Americans the great pride of owning something they call their own. Congress needs to act on this issue. Strengthening Social Security requires honesty and courage, and the party I'm proud to lead will do our duty. Our children's retirement security is more important than partisan politics.

Our party will continue to support the faith-based and community groups that bring hope to harsh places. We'll continue to promote a culture of life in which every person is valued and every life has meaning. And we will defend the institution of marriage from being redefined forever by activist judges.

And speaking about judges, the American people made it clear they want judges who faithfully interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. I applaud Senator Frist and Senator Specter and Senator Hatch and other

Members of the United States Senate in confirming some outstanding nominees who have waited a long time for a vote, Priscilla Owen and Janice Rogers Brown and Bill Pryor. I'll continue to urge the Senate to fulfill its constitutional responsibility by giving every judicial nominee an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor.

And speaking of confirmations, the Senate must promptly confirm John Bolton, my nominee to be our Ambassador to the United Nations, so we can get on with the business of reforming that institution.

My most solemn duty and the most solemn duty of those of us in Government here in Washington is to protect the American people. Our strategy is clear: We will be relentless; we will never tire in chasing down the terrorists; we will confront them abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

We carried out the largest reorganization of Government in a half-century to form a single Department with a single mission, protecting America from attack. The tireless efforts of the men and women of the Department of Homeland Security and Federal and State and local first-responders—protecting our Nation and making this country more secure. And as they do so, they need to have all the tools to be able to help defend this country. And that is why I call upon the United States Congress to renew all the provisions of the PATRIOT Act.

The PATRIOT Act is an important piece of legislation. It gives those folks who are on the frontline of fighting terror the same tools, many of the same tools that are used to track down drug kingpins or tax cheats. If those tools are good enough to track down drug kingpins, they ought to be good enough in this war on terror to give to our law enforcement so we can better defend this country.

And we're making progress. Since September the 11th, 2001, we've closed down terrorist networks. We brought to justice many of the key leaders of Al Qaida. We're disrupting their finances. There is no place they can hide from the United States of America and our allies and friends.

The best way to secure this country in the long run, though, is to spread democracy and freedom. We believe everybody deserves to be free. We believe everybody has a deep

desire in their heart to live in a free society. We believe mothers all around the world want to raise their children in a free and peaceful world.

And the people of Afghanistan showed clearly the desire of those who have lived under tyranny to take the risks necessary to live in a free society. Think about how far that country has come in a brief period of time. We enforced doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." And by removing the Taliban, America and the free world are safer. But at the same time, we gave the Afghan people a chance to live in a free and democratic society. And for the first time in the history of that country, for the first time in thousands of years, millions of people went to the polls to vote. And the first voter was a 19-year-old girl in Afghanistan.

Freedom is on the march from the Ukraine to Afghanistan to the Palestinian Territory to Lebanon and to Iraq. By removing Saddam Hussein from power, America and the free world are safer. By removing Saddam Hussein from power, the people of Iraq have a chance to live in a free society. And the United States of America will stand squarely with that new democracy as it grows and flourishes and becomes a free society in the heart of the Middle East.

I know many of you here have got relatives and friends who are serving in the United States military. I can't tell you how proud I am to be the Commander in Chief of such a great group of folks. America is more secure, the world is more free, the foundations of peace are being laid because of the brave men and women who wear the uniform of the United States military.

The United States has a special obligation, in my view, to work with freedom fighters all around the world, to stand squarely with the reformers. I believe it's important for generations to come, because I understand that democracies don't fight each other, that democracies are the way to defeat hatred, that democracies provide the best hope for men and women around the world. There's no doubt in my mind the policies that this administration has taken will make the world more peaceful for generations to come.

The American people have entrusted us with the leadership of this great country at an historic moment. We've set big goals, and they're not always easy to achieve. Otherwise, they'd have been done already. But we're going to continue to be the party that sets the big goals, the party that's idealistic, the party of reform. We'll continue to lead, no matter how tough the challenge might be. You see, the American people have given us their trust. But the good news for the American people is, in our policies we trust them. We trust their values. We trust their judgment. We trust them with their own money. So long as we stay true to our values and our ideas, we will do what Americans have always done. We will build a better world for our children and our grandchildren.

It is such an honor to be the President of such a great nation. Thank you for coming tonight. May God bless your families, and may God continue to bless our country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Ken Thompson, dinner chairman, 2005 President's Dinner, and his wife, Kathylee Thompson; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks to the 16th Annual Energy Efficiency Forum

June 15, 2005

Thank you all. Thanks for the warm welcome. John, thanks for the introduction. Thanks for the invitation to be here for the 16th annual Energy Efficiency Forum. It's an important forum. By advancing the national dialog on the future of energy, you're helping us support the cause of energy efficiency. And that's critical for our economy, and it's critical for the future of this Nation.

You see, increasing energy efficiency will help consumers save money. Increasing energy efficiency will leave American businesses with more capital, will make American businesses more competitive. Increasing energy efficiency will help reduce our energy consumption and to help us achieve a vital national goal, and that is making America less dependent on foreign sources of energy. And

that's what I want to talk to you all about today, a strategy to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I want to thank John. I want to thank Bob Catell, who is the event host. He's the chairman of the United States Energy Association. I want to thank Betty Arndt. I want to thank Barry Worthington. Thank you both for setting this event up. I want to thank the Assistant Secretary, David Garman, of the Department of Energy, for being here. I appreciate Pat Wood, the FERC Chairman. Where are you, Pat? There he is, my fellow Texan. How many children you got now? [*Laughter*] Three, one on the way? [*Laughter*]

I want to thank your fellow commissioners—Commissioner Brownell, Commissioner Kelliher, Commissioner Kelly—for joining you all. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for serving. Appreciate what you do.

I'm optimistic about this country's future, and Americans have a reason to be optimistic as well. Over the last 2 years, we have added more than 3.5 million new jobs. More Americans are working today than ever before in our Nation's history. Homeownership in America is at an alltime high, and that's good. We want more people owning something in America. We want more small-business owners. We want more homeowners. I, personally, think it would be good for the country if people had more control over their retirement accounts.

Small businesses are flourishing. Factory output is growing. Exports are at their highest level ever. Families are taking home more of what they earn. Because of our policies, our economy is growing and creating more opportunity and increased prosperity for millions of citizens, and that's good news.

And to build on this success and to keep this economy growing. We need an affordable, reliable supply of energy, and that starts with pursuing policies to make prices reasonable at the pump. Today, millions of American families and small businesses are hurting because of high gasoline prices. If you're trying to meet a payroll or trying to meet a family budget, even small increases at the pump have a big impact on your bottom line. For the sake of American families and American workers, this country must take action now