

A national emergency, within the meaning of chapter 53 of title 5, has existed since September 11, 2001, that includes Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The growth in Federal requirements is straining the Federal budget. Full statutory civilian pay increases costing \$8.8 billion in 2007 alone would interfere with our Nation's ability to pursue the war on terrorism.

Such cost increases would threaten our efforts against terrorism or force deep cuts in discretionary spending or Federal employment to stay within budget. Neither outcome is acceptable. Therefore, I have determined that a locality pay increase of 0.5 percent would be appropriate for GS and certain other employees in January 2007. Our national situation precludes granting larger locality pay increases at this time.

Accordingly, I have determined that under the authority of section 5304a of title 5, United States Code, locality-based comparability payments for the locality pay areas in amounts set forth in the attached table shall become effective on the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2007. When compared with the payments currently in effect, these comparability payments will increase the General Schedule payroll by 0.5 percent.

Finally, the law requires that I include in this report an assessment of the impact of my decision on the Government's ability to recruit and retain well-qualified employees. I do not believe this decision will materially affect our ability to continue to attract and retain a quality Federal workforce. To the contrary, since any pay raise above what I have proposed would likely be unfunded, agencies would have to absorb the additional cost and could have to freeze hiring in order to pay the higher rates. Moreover, GS "quit" rates continue to be very low (2.0 percent on an annual basis), well below the overall average "quit" rate in private enterprise. Should the need arise, the Government has many compensation tools, such as recruitment bonuses, retention allowances, and special salary rates, to maintain the high quality workforce that serves our Nation so very well.

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 on World AIDS Day

December 1, 2006

Laura and I welcome our guests—this is World AIDS Day. It's a day for the world to recognize the fact that there are 39 million people living with HIV/AIDS and a day to remember the fact that 25 million people have died of AIDS. It's a day, as well, for the United States to remember that we have a duty to do something about this epidemic, this pandemic.

And today Laura and I met with the Secretary of HHS, as well as Mark Dybul, our U.S. Coordinator for our AIDS effort, and people who are involved with helping to save lives, people from our country and people from around the world who have come to share with us the stories of compassion and courage.

This country is committed—we're committed in helping solve this problem by dedicating a lot of resources to the battle against HIV/AIDS. The American taxpayers have funded over \$15 billion to help groups around this table save lives. Before the PEPFAR program—that's the name of the program that we—that's what we call the program that we dedicate money to, to help save lives—before it became into being, there was about 50,000 people receiving life-saving drugs. Today, there are over 800,000 people receiving lifesaving drugs, and we thank those who are on the ground in the countries around the world who are using taxpayers' money to save lives. We believe that it's one thing to spend money; we also believe it's another thing to say that we expect there to be results. And the American people need to know, we're getting good results with your money, and we'll continue to spend it wisely.

We also—as we think about people affected with HIV/AIDS in countries around the world, we remember those who have got HIV/AIDS here at home. And it's very important for the American people to understand we're spending over \$18 billion to help save lives here at home. And I call upon the

Congress to reauthorize the Ryan White Act. The bill has passed the United States House of Representatives; the Senate has time to act before it goes on recess. It is an important piece of legislation that will enable us to continue our fight against HIV/AIDS domestically.

I can't thank you all enough for coming, and I thank you for being such decent, compassionate people. The pandemic of HIV/AIDS can be defeated, and the United States is willing to take the lead in that fight. But we can't do it alone. And so for our international partners, we appreciate what you do. For the faith-based community, we thank you for hearing the universal call to love a neighbor. And for the taxpayers, we appreciate your generosity in showing the world the good heart and compassion of the American people.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:41 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Northern Ireland Agreement

December 1, 2006

The United States welcomes the recent progress made by the Northern Ireland parties and the British and Irish Governments to implement the agreement reached at St. Andrews, and I recognize the leadership shown by the political party leaders. The United States fully supports the agreed way forward for Northern Ireland: a power-sharing government by the end of March next year, based on support for the rule of law and policing.

Executive Order 13415—Assignment of Certain Pay-Related Functions

December 1, 2006

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Assignment of Functions. The functions of the President under sections 4505a, 5305, and 5377 of title 5, United States Code, are assigned to the Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

Sec. 2. Revocations. (a) Sections 3 and 6 of Executive Order 12748 of February 1, 1991, as amended, are revoked. Sections 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9 of Executive Order 12748 are renumbered as sections 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, respectively.

(b) Section 2 of Executive Order 12828 of January 5, 1993, is revoked. Section 3 of Executive Order 12828 is renumbered as section 2.

Sec. 3. General Provision. This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity against the United States, its departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 1, 2006.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:49 a.m., December 4, 2006]

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

Digest of Other White House Announcements

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

November 25

In the morning at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

November 27

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Tallinn,