

and porkbarrel spending for local congressional districts. This spending includes things like \$74 million for peanut storage, \$25 million for spinach growers, and a host of other spending items that have nothing to do with the war. Even with all this extra spending tacked on, the vote in the House was very close. This means that the Democrats do not have enough votes to override my veto.

By choosing to make a political statement and passing a bill they know will never become law, the Democrats in Congress have only delayed the delivery of the vital funds and resources our troops need. The clock is running. The Secretary of Defense has warned that if Congress does not approve the emergency funding for our troops by April 15th, our men and women in uniform will face significant disruptions, and so will their families. April 15th is also about the same time that Congress returns from its Easter vacation. Members of Congress need to put our troops first, not politics. They need to send me a clean bill, without conditions, without restrictions, and without pork.

This is an important moment for our Nation, and it is an important moment for the new Congress. My administration has presented a reasonable way forward on the matter of U.S. attorneys and on ensuring that our men and women in uniform have the funds and the flexibility they need to win in Iraq. It is not too late for us to work together. For the good of our Nation, I ask the Democratic leaders in Congress to seize the opportunity before us and move beyond political statements to bipartisan action.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1 p.m. on March 23 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Meeting With United States Automobile Makers

March 26, 2007

The President. I've just spent quite a while talking to our CEOs of American automobile companies. And I was interested in their take on my goal of reducing gasoline consumption by 20 percent over the next 10 years.

I found it very interesting that by 2012, 50 percent of the automobiles in America will be flex-fuel vehicles. That means that the American consumer will be able to either use gasoline or ethanol, depending upon, obviously, price and convenience. That's a major technological breakthrough for the country. If you want to reduce gasoline usage, like I believe we need to do so for national security reasons as well as for environmental concerns, the consumer has got to be in a position to make a rational choice. And so I appreciate very much the fact that American automobile manufacturers recognize the reality of the world in which we live and are using new technologies to give the consumers different options.

Right now, most of our ethanol is made from corn. But the Federal Government is spending a lot of money to try to develop new technologies that will mean that ethanol could be made from wood chips or switch grass. Part of that request is embedded in a request to the Congress, and I would hope that Congress would move expeditiously on our plan to reduce gasoline usage by 20 percent over the next 10 years. It's in our national security interest that we do this; it's in economic security interest we do it; and, all at the same time, it will help us be better stewards of the environment.

And now I'd like to ask these gentlemen to make a few comments. Go ahead, Rick.

G. Richard Wagoner, Jr. Yes, I'd just— from General Motors' perspective, we very much share the President's vision, and we definitely see a path through to both lower oil consumption, lower amounts of imported oil, and fewer carbon emissions. And obviously, near-term opportunity that we are moving on right now, as the President cited, is flex-fuel vehicles that are powered by E-85 ethanol. There are millions on the road

today. As a group, we've agreed to double our production by the year 2010 and then have 50 percent of our production E-85-capable by the year 2012. This makes a big difference, and there's nothing that can be done which can reduce the curve of growth in imported oil and actually turn it down like using E-85, taking advantage of what's there today.

So we look forward to the opportunity to work closely with the administration, the Congress to increase the production of ethanol and to improve the distribution. And on the manufacturer's side, we look very, very much forward to playing our role in that process as well.

The President. Thank you—[inaudible].

Alan Mulally. Well, I might add to what Rick said, that we at Ford absolutely are supportive of the President's goal, both for energy efficiency and independence and to be good stewards of our environment.

One of the neat things about the conversation, again, today, on the continuing dialog that we've had, is being able to—for the United States system to have options and have flexibility. And the fact that we have ethanol solutions today, hybrids coming along, and plus hydrogen and fuel cells and new battery technology, gives some great options to satisfy our need for flexibility, as well as being good stewards of the environment.

So, Mr. President, we appreciate the leadership, and we look forward to working with you going forward.

Thomas W. LaSorda. Well, DaimlerChrysler, which includes the Mercedes Car Group, the Freightliner, and other truck divisions in the Chrysler Group, we've committed as well, by 2012, to have 50 percent of our production not only in E-85 but biodiesel. This Jeep Grand Cherokee here today is going into production as we speak, being shipped from the factory with B-5.

So we're very committed to this as well, and we think this is the answer for America to lower our dependence on foreign oil.

Thank you.

The President. One of the things that I think it's important for the American taxpayer to understand is that we're using some of their dollars to promote new technologies, and we're working with these CEOs and

their respective companies to advance new technologies. They're on the leading edge of technological change, and it's in our interest to help promote these new technologies that are coming to the market.

And I'm excited about the future. I'm optimistic we can meet our goal. I look forward to working with Congress to do so. And I appreciate you all coming today.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. Participating in the meeting were G. Richard Wagoner, Jr., chairman and chief executive officer, General Motors Corp.; Alan Mulally, president and chief executive officer, Ford Motor Co.; and Thomas W. LaSorda, president and chief executive officer, Chrysler Group, DaimlerChrysler.

Proclamation 8116—Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 2007

March 26, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

A future of hope and opportunity in America requires that all our children develop the knowledge and character they need in life. On Education and Sharing Day, we recognize our responsibility to ensure that our young people have the foundation necessary to lead lives rich in purpose and fulfillment.

Education and Sharing Day honors the legacy of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson and emphasizes our commitment to teach the next generation of Americans the values that make our country strong. The Lubavitcher Rebbe believed that society should "make a new commitment to kindness," and he helped to establish education and outreach centers offering social service programs and humanitarian aid around the world.

The character of our young people is strengthened by serving a cause greater than self and by the anchor of virtues, including courage and compassion. By instilling a spirit of service in our children, we create a more optimistic future for them and our Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America,