

And now, one of the Cochairmen of this Commission, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

[At this point, former Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Richard D. Parsons made brief remarks.]

The President. I now have the honor of signing the Commission into being.

[*The President signed the Executive order.*]

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:27 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The Executive order of May 2 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the President's Commission To Strengthen Social Security

May 2, 2001

Dear Senator Daschle and Congressman Gephardt:

Thank you for your letter of April 12, providing your recommendations concerning the creation of a Social Security commission.

I have pledged that I will work to develop a bipartisan consensus to strengthen Social Security, preserving the program for senior Americans and building wealth for younger Americans. I believe that a bipartisan commission will provide the renewed energy and focus that can help us transform our common commitment to strengthening Social Security into legislative action on behalf of Americans of all ages.

In your letter, you expressed support for some of the principles that I have outlined as cornerstones for any reform of Social Security. Like you, I believe that we must honor our commitment to pay full promised benefits to those who have made a lifetime of contributions to the Social Security program. I also believe that Social Security surpluses must be dedicated to Social Security only.

I was pleased to see that you do not oppose personal accounts, even while acknowledging legitimate differences regarding their appropriate structure and financing. Please be assured that the commission will consider a full and fair analysis of all

methods of designing and financing such accounts.

I share your desire that the commission be truly bipartisan. It is my intention that the commission be composed of an equal number of Republicans and Democrats, and that the commission make use of the nonpartisan and independent projections embodied in the Social Security Trustees' reports.

As you note, it has been nearly two decades since the last significant legislation to shore up Social Security's finances. Too frequently in recent years, commissions and advisory councils have been constructed in a way that reproduced legislative gridlock. Such structures frustrated needed action to strengthen the programs on which Americans depend. It is not a coincidence that the last commission to have contributed significant legislation, the Greenspan Commission of 1981–83, was not handicapped by restrictive voting and approval procedures.

The best way to ensure that the commission receives the necessary internal and external approval is for both the President and the Congressional leadership to provide our support for the development of its recommendations. Those Americans who depend on Social Security today, as well as those who will depend on it in the future, deserve no less from us.

May 2 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

Thank you for your views. I look forward to working with you in the months to come.
Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader, and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders *May 2, 2001*

Budget Agreement

It's my honor to welcome back to the Cabinet Room leaders in the House and the Senate, both Republicans and Democrats, who worked hard on the budget. There is a budget deal; it's an agreement that makes a lot of sense. In the agreement is the largest tax cut in a generation and reasonable levels of spending.

This plan could not have been done without the leadership of the Speaker and the leader of the Senate, nor could it have been done without two really fine budget chairmen, Congressman Nussle and Senator Domenici, both of whom and their staffs and their committees worked long, hard hours.

And finally, it couldn't have been done without the cooperation and work of some

of our Democrat friends, Breaux in Louisiana and Miller of Georgia, Condit of California, Members around this table, who realized that it's time—it was time to come together to put a good budget together on behalf of the American people; Members who realize that what we're talking about is not partisan politics but good budget politics, good budget policy. They'll always recognize that we're here to serve the people, and this is the people's budget. It's a good budget for the working people of America, and I'm proud to congratulate you all for a job really well done.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the District of Columbia Courts Fiscal Year 2002 Budget Request *May 2, 2001*

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the District of Columbia Code, as amended, I am transmitting the District of Columbia Courts FY 2002 Budget Submission.

The District of Columbia Courts have submitted a FY 2002 budget request for \$111.7 million for operating expenses, \$41.4 million for capital improvements to courthouse facilities, and \$39.7 million for De-

fender Services in the District of Columbia Courts. My FY 2002 budget includes recommended funding levels of \$105.2 million for operations, \$6.0 million for capital improvements, and \$34.3 million for Defender Services. My transmittal of the District of Columbia Courts' budget request does not represent an endorsement of its contents.