

- \$140 million for border safety to ensure an open border for trade between the United States and Mexico through the establishment of an inspection and certification system that will ensure a high level of motor carrier safety;
- \$5 billion for Coast Guard operations and capital expenses, including \$243 million to support expanded drug interdiction efforts as authorized in the Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act;
- \$1.2 billion for the newly created Transportation Security Administration to enhance airport and aircraft security;
- \$32.8 billion for key highway infrastructure and safety initiatives in compliance with authorized levels;
- \$10.2 billion for aviation operations and airport improvement grants to expand safety, security, and capacity; and
- \$6.7 billion for mass transit grants and capital programs.

Several provisions in the bill purport to require congressional approval before executive branch execution of aspects of the bill. I will interpret such provisions to require notification only, since any other interpretation would contradict the Supreme Court ruling in *INS v. Chadha*.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
December 18, 2001.

NOTE: H.R. 2299, approved December 18, was assigned Public Law No. 107–87.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders December 19, 2001

### *Economic Stimulus Package*

I am proud to report that members of both political parties and both bodies of Congress have come to an agreement as to how to stimulate our economy and how to take care of people in need, people who have lost their job.

I'm proud of the Members around this table for making the conscious decision to work together to answer some serious needs that face our country. A lot of people have lost their jobs and don't have health care, and the people around this table said, "I want to do something about it," and they proposed a very constructive, real plan.

A lot of people around this table understand that in the long term we've got to make sure our economy grows. And so we've provided stimulus to the economy, most of which affects middle-class America. The income tax rate reduction affects those making \$27,000 to \$65,000 a year, hard-

working Americans who could use help coming into the holiday season.

I can't thank the chairman, the Speaker, the leaders around this table for recognizing that there's something more important than politics, and that's to do our jobs, to recognize we have a serious problem and address it and solve the problem.

This bill can pass both bodies. This bill will pass the House; it's got enough votes to pass the Senate. And therefore, I look forward to working with both bodies in any way I can to convince those who are reluctant to get a bill done that this makes sense for America, so we can leave for Christmas knowing full-well that we've done the people's business.

Again, congratulations to you all. I want to thank you for your work, thank you for your care for America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 a.m. in the Speaker's office at the Capitol. A tape

was not available for verification of the content of these remarks. The Office of the Press

Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### Remarks on Viewing the “Spirit of Louisiana” Firetruck for New York City *December 19, 2001*

*Gov. Mike Foster.* And now, Chief, it's your turn. That's an intro. [*Laughter*]

*President Bush.* I guess he meant Commander in Chief. [*Laughter*]

*Governor Foster.* I just called you “Chief”; you're big into nicknames. [*Laughter*]

*President Bush.* Well, Governor, thanks for coming. You know, I always love Louisiana, and I love the people of Louisiana. And I always knew the people of Louisiana were a little different—[*laughter*—in a good way. And you just showed the Nation why. So I want to welcome you all for coming. Thanks for being here, Mike, and it's good to see the first lady, too. Welcome to the White House, and welcome you all.

This “Spirit of Louisiana” truck really does show the deep concern of the good folks of Louisiana. Everybody in our Nation realized on September 11th, we were all affected. They might have hit right around the corner here, and they might have hit in New York City, but it affected all of us. And the good people of Louisiana realize that. I particularly love this story, about how Ronnie decides to do something on behalf of the fellow citizens. So he gets on the phone and calls a local radio personality—the Governor. [*Laughter*] And out of that came a huge volunteer effort in the State of Louisiana to provide help and aid to the good people of New York City.

And I think the Americans need to understand that this is the kind of story that makes our country so unique and so different. It's a story that makes me so proud to be the President of such a great—such great land.

I want to thank Senator for coming; thank you, Mary, for being here. I want to thank the two Congressmen for being here; John and David, thank you all for coming. Welcome. I want to thank all the volunteers who worked on this project. I want to thank the firefighters and police officers from the State of Louisiana who've come. You obviously represent a noble profession and a profession that really knows no borders. And you're on your way to express your solidarity with people who fight fires. They may talk with a different accent, but they share the same dangers. And I appreciate you all coming, and I know people in New York City are really anxious to have you up there.

One of the things I like to remind the enemy is, “You thought you were going to change America when you hit us; you thought, by your actions and by your attacks, that somehow this Nation was so soft that we didn't know how to respond.” And they're paying a terrible price for their miscalculation. We're making great progress in the first theater of this long war to rout terror where it may exist.

I'm really proud of our military. I'm proud of the job they're doing. I'm proud of the fact that we've set a clear goal with certain objectives, and those objectives are being met.

I know the Governor likes to hunt rabbits down in Louisiana. Sometimes those rabbits think they can hide from the Governor, but eventually, he smokes them out and gets them. And that's exactly what is happening to Mr. bin Laden and all the murderers that he's trying to hide in Afghanistan.