

Taoiseach, may good fortune be yours, may your joys never end, may good luck be with you wherever you go, and your blessings outnumber the shamrocks that grow. Welcome.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:38 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland, who presented the shamrocks; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

Statement on Senate Action on Legislation To Ban Partial-Birth Abortion *March 13, 2003*

Partial-birth abortion is an abhorrent procedure that offends human dignity, and I commend the Senate for passing legislation to ban it. Today's action is an important step toward building a culture of life in

America. I look forward to the House passing legislation and working with the Senate to resolve any differences so that I can sign legislation banning partial-birth abortion into law.

Statement on Senate Action To Block a Vote on the Nomination of Miguel Estrada To Be a United States Circuit Judge *March 13, 2003*

Today, 42 Senate Democrats have decided to continue their filibuster to block a vote on the nomination of Miguel Estrada. The Senate has a constitutional responsibility to hold an up-or-down vote on all judicial nominees within a reasonable time, but some Senate Democrats have abandoned that responsibility in favor of partisan obstructionist tactics. The judicial confirmation process is broken, and the consequences for the American people are real. Because of the Senate's failure to hold timely votes, the number of judicial vacancies has become unacceptably high. When the Federal courts are understaffed, they

cannot act in a timely manner to resolve disputes that affect the lives and liberties of all Americans.

In order to protect the rights of Americans and the sanctity of the Constitution, this obstruction must end. Miguel Estrada was nominated nearly 2 years ago, yet he still has not received a fair vote. I call on the Senate to end the delays, stop holding Miguel Estrada to a double standard, and live up to its responsibility to hold an up-or-down vote on this highly qualified nominee. As I said before, let each Senator vote as he or she thinks best, but give the man a vote.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Health Care Legislation *March 13, 2003*

America's medical liability system is badly broken. Frivolous and abusive law-

suits are driving up costs for patients, threatening access to quality health care,