

Statement on Congressional Action on Jobs-and-Growth Tax Relief Legislation

May 23, 2003

I commend the House and Senate for acting in a bipartisan fashion to bring tax relief to American families, small businesses, and entrepreneurs. In passing this jobs-and-growth plan, Congress has taken a major step forward in the effort to boost economic growth and create jobs. One hundred thirty-six million taxpayers, including 12 million seniors and 23 million small-

business owners, will directly benefit from this plan. A married couple with two children and household income of \$40,000 will see their taxes cut by 96 percent this year. A growing economy is an urgent priority for all Americans, and I look forward to signing this bill and to seeing that tax relief is felt in paychecks quickly.

The President's Radio Address

May 24, 2003

Good morning. This week Congress took vital action to create jobs in America. Following the outlines of a jobs-and-growth package I announced in January, Members of the House and Senate reached agreement on a bill to strengthen our Nation's economy by reducing income-tax rates, lowering the marriage penalty, increasing the child credit from \$600 to \$1,000, increasing the expensing allowance for small-business investment, and significantly reducing taxes on dividends. These tax cuts will go into effect immediately and some retroactively.

About 25 million families with children will see their child credit increase and will receive checks of up to \$400 per child. And 136 million Americans who pay income taxes, including 23 million small-business owners who pay taxes at the individual rate, will see their taxes lowered.

By leaving American families with more to spend, more to save, and more to invest, these reforms will help boost the Nation's economy and create jobs. When people have extra take-home pay, there's greater demand for goods and services, and employers will need more workers to meet that demand.

A higher expensing allowance will help small firms, including farms and ranches, to buy new equipment so they can become more productive and expand their operations. They will also have more money to add new employees. And reducing the tax rate on dividends will help shareholders across America, from teachers invested in 401(k) accounts to seniors who depend on dividends for their financial well-being.

I appreciate the leadership of Congressman Bill Thomas of California and Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa, who worked with their colleagues to hammer out a final agreement. This achievement is a victory for every family struggling to pay the bills, every entrepreneur hoping to expand the business and create new jobs, and every American looking for work. I look forward to signing this jobs-and-growth legislation in the coming week.

I will also work with Congress to bring down the budget deficit that has resulted from war, recession, and terrorist attacks. Faster growth in the economy will bring more revenues into the Federal Treasury. Yet moving toward a balanced budget also requires that we hold Federal spending to a responsible level. Spending discipline is

crucial to my economic program. I urge the Congress to set priorities and stick to the responsible budget plan they passed back in April.

By that measure, discretionary Federal spending will rise by 4 percent, about the same as the increase in the average American family's income. Governments should not grow faster than workers' paychecks. Governments should follow the example of American families by setting priorities and staying with them.

Our citizens and our economy have endured great challenges over the last 2½ years. Yet this Nation's workers and entrepreneurs, who remain the most productive in the world, are rising to meet every chal-

lenge. Our economy continues to grow, and inflation and interest rates remain low. With new relief for the taxpayers, we have laid the foundation for even stronger growth in the years ahead and more jobs for American workers.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:38 p.m. on May 23 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at a Memorial Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia *May 26, 2003*

Thank you all very much for the warm welcome. Mr. Secretary, thank you for your leadership. Secretary Principi, Members of the United States Congress, General Myers, members of the Joint Chiefs, General Jackson and Colonel Ray and Colonel Steedley, veterans, honored guests, and my fellow Americans, we come to this Memorial Day with deep awareness of recent loss and recent courage.

Beyond the Tomb of the Unknowns, in Section 60 of Arlington Cemetery, we have laid to rest Americans who fell in the battle of Iraq. One of the funerals was for Marine Second Lieutenant Frederick Pokorney, Jr., of Jacksonville, North Carolina. His wife, Carolyn, received a folded flag. His 2-year-old daughter, Taylor, knelt beside her mother at the casket to say a final goodbye. An uncle later said of this fine lieutenant, "He was proud of what he was doing and proud of his family, a hard-working guy—the best guy you can ever know. I hope the American people don't forget." This Nation does not forget.

Last month, in Section 60, First Lieutenant Rob Jenkins was buried, along with five other members of a bomber crew. They were lost when their plane was shot down over North Africa in 1942. Rob Jenkins had joined the Army Air Corps after Pearl Harbor, and he was 20 years old on his final mission. Six decades later, his plane was found and the remains of the crew were carefully identified, returned home, and buried with military honors. Rob's sister, Helen, said, "We were very proud that the Government would care that much. After all, it was such a long time ago." This Nation does not forget.

On Memorial Day, Americans place flags on military graves, walk past a wall of black granite in Washington, DC, and many families think of a face and voice they miss so much. Today we honor the men and women who have worn the Nation's uniform and were last seen on duty. From the battles of Iraq and Afghanistan to the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam to the trials of World War to the struggles that made