

The executive branch shall construe and implement section 323(b)(2) of the Act, relating to certain disputes, in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President to supervise the unitary executive branch.

The executive branch shall construe the provisions of section 411(i) of the Act, concerning the provision of executive branch information and records to the National Commission on Small Community Air Service, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to withhold information the disclosure of which could impair the foreign relations, the national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties.

The executive branch shall construe and implement section 46111 of title 49, as enacted by section 601(a) of the Act, relating to access to and use of classified information, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to classify and control access to information bearing on the national security.

The executive branch shall implement sections 702 and 703 of the Act, which relate to the award of certain government scholarships, in a manner consistent with the equal protection requirements of the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution.

Section 44511(f) of title 49, as enacted by section 712 of the Act, requires the Secretary of Transportation to appoint "an

independent governing board" for a 4-year airport cooperative research pilot program. The executive branch shall construe the reference to the board as "independent" to mean independence within the Department of Transportation from the FAA, while the board remains subject to the statutory authority of the Secretary as the head of the Department and the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch. Moreover, the executive branch shall construe the provisions for nomination of candidates for the board by particular officials or organizations as advisory, as is consistent with the Appointments Clause of the Constitution.

The executive branch shall construe as advisory the provisions of section 812(a) of the Act that purport to direct or burden the conduct of negotiations by the executive branch with foreign governments, international organizations, or other entities abroad. Such provisions, if construed as mandatory rather than advisory, would impermissibly interfere with the President's constitutional authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs, participate in international negotiations, and supervise the unitary executive branch.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
December 12, 2003.

NOTE: H.R. 2115, approved December 12, was assigned Public Law No. 108-176.

The President's Radio Address *December 13, 2003*

Good morning. This week I was honored to sign the Medicare Act of 2003, the greatest advance in health coverage for America's seniors since Medicare was founded nearly four decades ago. This new law will give seniors better choices and more con-

trol over their health care and provide a prescription drug benefit.

Beginning in 2006, most seniors now without prescription coverage can expect to see their current drug bills cut roughly in half in exchange for a monthly premium

of about \$35. And for the first time, seniors will have peace of mind that they will not face unlimited expenses for their Medicare.

These and other major improvements in Medicare came about because Republicans and Democrats in Congress were willing to work together for the interests of our senior citizens. We were able to pass this law because we listened to the people, set the right priorities, and worked hard until we finished the job.

The reform and modernization of Medicare was one milestone in a year of accomplishment. We worked with Congress to take action in a number of areas on behalf of the American people. Last May, the House and Senate passed my jobs-and-growth package into law, delivering substantial tax relief to 91 million Americans. We reduced taxes for everyone who pays income taxes, increased the child tax credit, cut the taxes on dividends and capital gains, and gave 23 million small-business owners incentives to invest for the future.

And now we are seeing the results. In the third quarter, the economy grew at the fastest pace in almost 20 years. Productivity, manufacturing, and housing construction are expanding, and we have added over 300,000 jobs since August. The tax relief we passed is working, and our economy is gaining strength.

Legislation passed this year also showed the compassion and the good heart of America. We created the American Dream Downpayment Fund to help low-income citizens afford the downpayment on homes of their own. We defended children from the violence of partial-birth abortion and passed new incentives to promote the adoption of children in foster care. And we acted to fight the global spread of AIDS by launching a multiyear emergency effort to prevent millions of new infections in Africa and the Caribbean and to provide medicine and humane care to millions more who suffer.

This year we took important action to protect the environment. Our whole Nation saw the devastation left by wildfires in the West, and we passed healthy forest legislation to thin the underbrush that fuels catastrophic blazes.

Our Government also took urgent action on every front in the war on terror. Congress appropriated more than \$31 billion for the Department of Homeland Security to prepare first-responders and safeguard our ports and infrastructure and help scientists develop vaccines against dangerous biological threats. Our country stood behind the men and women of our Armed Forces as they liberated Iraq and helped carry out the work of reconstruction there and in Afghanistan. In Congress, members of both parties worked together to provide vital resources for our troops, who are fulfilling their responsibility to defend the Nation.

All these actions have made us safer, more prosperous, and a better country. We confronted problems with determination and bipartisan spirit. Yet our work is not done. There will be pressing business in the new year on issues from job creation to health care to public schools. And above all, we will continue to fight the war on terror until the war is won.

On behalf of all Americans, I thank the Congress for a productive year. Working together, we can add to this progress in the year to come.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:35 a.m. on December 12 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 13. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 12 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.