

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments

July 14, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2005 budget amendments for the Departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor. In addition, I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2004 language proposal for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Overall, the discretionary budget authority proposed in my FY 2005 budget would not be increased by these requests.

The details of these proposals are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 15.

Remarks on Signing the Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act

July 15, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Welcome to the White House.

[At this point, the lights in the room flickered.]

The President. Thanks for coming. [Laughter] Welcome to the White House. [Laughter]

We're taking an important step today to combat the problem of identity theft, one of the fastest growing financial crimes in our Nation. Last year alone, nearly 10 million Americans had their identities stolen by criminals who robbed them and the Nation's businesses of nearly \$50 billion through fraudulent transactions. The bill I'm about to sign sends a clear message that a person who violates another's financial privacy will be punished.

The Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act also prescribes prison sentences for those who use identity theft to commit other crimes, including terrorism. It reflects our Government's resolve to answer serious offenses with serious penalties.

I appreciate the members of my administration who worked on this important piece of legislation, particularly Cabinet members John Snow and John Ashcroft. I appreciate the Members of the Congress who worked hard on this legislation: Senator Orrin Hatch and Senator Jon Kyl, Senator Dianne Feinstein; and Members of the House, Chairman Senator Jim Sensenbrenner and John Carter from the great State of Texas. I want to thank the other Members of Congress who are here, members of both political parties. Thank you for coming. I thank those who are on their staffs who have worked hard.

The crime of identity theft undermines the basic trust on which our economy depends. When a person takes out an insurance policy or makes an online purchase or opens a savings account, he or she must have confidence that personal financial information will be protected and treated with care. Identity theft harms not only its direct victims but also many businesses and customers whose confidence is shaken. Like other forms of stealing, identity theft