

fair. And the positive news is, in this town, people have come up with a fair solution that will treat people with respect and give them justice when they need it and, at the same time, hold people to account when they need to be held to account, without affecting our capacity to grow our economy. Fairness is all we ask for.

The scales of justice need to be balanced, and they're not balanced today. And so good people from around the country, including Walter and Larry, have come to the Halls of Congress to help balance those scales. And fortunately, there are good Senators and fair Congressmen who understand that all we seek is balance. And now is

the time for the United States Congress to balance the scales when it comes to class-action lawsuits, to do their duty to make this country as good a country as it can possibly be.

I want to thank our panelists for coming. I hope you've enjoyed this as much as I have. I'm honored that you would take time and stay over from getting back home to help explain the need for this country to act on this important issue.

Thank you for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:31 p.m. at the U.S. Department of Commerce.

## Statement on a Supplemental Appropriations Request To Support the Areas Recovering From the Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunamis *February 9, 2005*

More than 6 weeks have passed since the tsunami took over 150,000 lives in one of the world's worst natural disasters. Thanks to the immediate and effective response of the U.S. military and the U.S. Agency for International Development, the United States, working with other members of the international community, was able to prevent additional loss of life and to deliver relief to those in need.

I will seek \$950 million as part of the supplemental appropriations request to support the areas recovering from the tsunami

and to cover the costs of relief efforts to date. This amount includes an additional \$600 million above my initial commitment of \$350 million. We will use these resources to provide assistance and to work with the affected nations on rebuilding vital infrastructure that reenergizes economies and strengthens societies.

I appreciate the efforts of former Presidents Bush and Clinton to raise private donations in the United States, and we are grateful to all of those who have donated money to help those in need.

## Remarks in a Discussion on Strengthening Social Security in Raleigh, North Carolina *February 10, 2005*

*The President.* Thank you all for coming. Thanks for coming. Okay. Thanks for the warm welcome. We got a lot of work to do here. *[Laughter]*

*Audience member.* *[Inaudible]*

*The President.* Yes, thanks. Okay. Listen, we're here to talk about an important subject. And I want to thank some of our