

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Child Interstate Abortion Notification Legislation

April 27, 2005

I commend the House for its bipartisan vote to protect the health and safety of minors by ensuring that State parental involvement laws are not circumvented. The parents of pregnant minors can provide counsel, guidance, and support to their

children and should be involved in these decisions. I urge the Senate to pass this important legislation and help continue to build a culture of life in America.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 748.

Statement on the Iraqi Transitional National Assembly's Vote To Confirm Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jafari and His Cabinet

April 28, 2005

Iraq's Transitional National Assembly has voted by an overwhelming margin to confirm Ibrahim al-Jafari as Iraq's next Prime Minister. They also have approved a list of Cabinet ministers who will represent the unity and diversity of Iraq in the months ahead. I join with all Americans in congratulating Iraq's new leaders and in wishing them well as they begin to serve their country in this new Government. I appreciate the dedicated work of the outgoing Interim Government, which has governed Iraq for the last 10 months.

The Iraqi Transitional Government will confront important challenges in fighting terrorists and enemies of democracy, training the Iraqi security forces, and providing basic services to its citizens. It will also lead the difficult and essential work of drafting a new constitution for a free and democratic Iraq. The United States is confident that the new Government will meet these challenges in the months ahead, and America will stand by Iraq, its leaders, and the Iraqi people as they continue their work to establish a stable, peaceful, and democratic Iraq.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of a Budget Framework Resolution

April 28, 2005

I applaud the House for passing a budget framework that protects America, helps economic growth, funds our priorities, and keeps us on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009. This is a responsible budget that reins in spending to limits not seen in years. I appreciate the Members of Con-

gress in the House and the Senate who worked hard to produce this agreement and who support its passage. It is not the Government's money that gets spent in Washington, DC. It is the people's money, and taxpayer dollars must be spent wisely or not spent at all.

The President's News Conference April 28, 2005

The President. Good evening. Tonight I will discuss two vital priorities for the American people, and then I'd be glad to answer some of your questions.

Millions of American families and small businesses are hurting because of higher gasoline prices. My administration is doing everything we can to make gasoline more affordable. In the near term, we will continue to encourage oil-producing nations to maximize their production. Here at home, we'll protect consumers. There will be no price gouging at gas pumps in America.

We must address the root causes that are driving up gas prices. Over the past decade, America's energy consumption has been growing about 40 times faster than our energy production. That means we're relying more on energy produced abroad.

To reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy, we must take four key steps. First, we must better use technology to become better conservers of energy. Secondly, we must find innovative and environmentally sensitive ways to make the most of our existing energy resources, including oil, natural gas, coal, and safe, clean nuclear power. Third, we must develop promising new sources of energy, such as hydrogen or ethanol or biodiesel. Fourth, we must help growing energy consumers overseas like China and India apply new technologies to use energy more efficiently and reduce global demand of fossil fuels.

I applaud the House for passing a good energy bill. Now the Senate needs to act on this urgent priority. American consumers have waited long enough. To help reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy, Congress needs to get an energy bill to my desk by this summer so I can sign it into law.

Congress also needs to address the challenges facing Social Security. I've traveled the country to talk with the American peo-

ple. They understand that Social Security is headed for serious financial trouble, and they expect their leaders in Washington to address the problem.

Social Security worked fine during the last century, but the math has changed. A generation of baby boomers is getting ready to retire. I happen to be one of them. Today, there are about 40 million retirees receiving benefits. By the time all the baby boomers have retired, there will be more than 72 million retirees drawing Social Security benefits. Baby boomers will be living longer and collecting benefits over long retirements than previous generations. And Congress has ensured that their benefits will rise faster than the rate of inflation.

In other words, there's a lot of us getting ready to retire who will be living longer and receiving greater benefits than the previous generation. And to compound the problem, there are fewer people paying into the system. In 1950, there were 16 workers for every beneficiary; today, there are 3.3 workers for every beneficiary; soon there will be 2 workers for every beneficiary.

These changes have put Social Security on the path to bankruptcy. When the baby boomers start retiring in 3 years, Social Security will start heading toward the red. In 2017, the system will start paying out more in benefits than it collects in payroll taxes. Every year after that, the shortfall will get worse, and by 2041, Social Security will be bankrupt.

Franklin Roosevelt did a wonderful thing when he created Social Security. The system has meant a lot for a lot of people. Social Security has provided a safety net that has provided dignity and peace of mind for millions of Americans in their retirement. Yet there's a hole in the safety