

At every stage of his career, Admiral Allen has inspired those around him with energy and dedication to service. One of his former colleagues likened Admiral Allen to the Energizer bunny. [Laughter] Another said, "He brings out the best in people, especially in times of crisis." I want to thank Admiral Allen for his willingness to take on this incredibly important responsibility, and I look forward to calling him Commandant of the Coast Guard.

One of Admiral Allen's most important tasks as Commandant will be to help ensure that the Federal Government is ready for the hurricane season, which begins a week from today. The Coast Guard performed heroically during last year's hurricanes, and other agencies of our Government can look to you for example.

We're determined to learn the lessons of Katrina, and we're doing everything possible to be prepared for the next storm. The Department of Homeland Security has reviewed emergency plans for all 50 States and America's 75 largest cities. The Department is working closely with communities to identify any weaknesses in their plans and to find ways to improve them now.

Secretary Chertoff has taken steps to reform FEMA, improve partnerships with the

Red Cross and the Department of Defense, expand the amount of supplies the Federal Government has on hand. We're also making it clear that all able-bodied Americans should have the resources necessary to sustain themselves for 48 to 72 hours after a disaster so that emergency personnel can focus on saving those who cannot help themselves.

I appreciate the many dedicated Americans who are working to prepare for this hurricane season. And I'm confident that if danger arrives, whether from nature or man, the United States Coast Guard will be ready.

The Coast Guard has always been ready to defend our people and our freedom, and I thank you for your dedicated service. *Semper Paratus.*

And now, in recognition of your exceptional service during Hurricane Katrina, I will present the Presidential Unit Citation to the United States Coast Guard.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. at Fort Lesley J. McNair. In his remarks, he referred to Capt. Wilbur C. Douglass III, USN, chaplain of the Coast Guard.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Energy Legislation May 25, 2006

I applaud the House of Representatives for passing the energy and water appropriations bill. I am grateful for the House leadership's work on it. This bill marks a critical first step toward realizing my American Competitiveness Initiative, and it fully funds my request for the Energy Department's Office of Science. I appreciate the leadership of Chairman Hobson and Chair-

man Lewis in working to keep our economy the most competitive in the world. This bill also will support my Advanced Energy Initiative and help make America more secure and less dependent on foreign sources of energy. I urge the Senate to join the House in supporting these important initiatives.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 5427.

Statement on the National Economy *May 25, 2006*

America's economy is on the fast track. Today's revised report by the Commerce Department indicates our economy grew at 5.3 percent for the first quarter of this year. That is the fastest growth in 2½ years and another clear sign that our economy is powerful, productive, and prosperous. I commend America's workers, small-business

owners, and innovators for contributing to this strong economic growth. I will continue to work to pursue pro-growth policies, make the tax cuts permanent, and restrain Government spending so that opportunity reaches every American neighborhood and every American family.

Statement on the Department of Justice's Handling of Representative William J. Jefferson's Materials *May 25, 2006*

Over the last several days, the House of Representatives and the Department of Justice have attempted to resolve a dispute over the execution of a search warrant on the Capitol Hill office of Congressman William Jefferson, who is under criminal investigation.

The Department of Justice's search was part of an important investigation of alleged public corruption. At the same time, the bipartisan leadership of the House of Representatives believes this search violated the constitutional principle of separation of powers and the Speech or Debate Clause of the Constitution. They note these principles must be adhered to, even in the pursuit of a legitimate criminal investigation.

I recognize these are deeply held views. Our Government has not faced such a dilemma in more than two centuries. Yet after days of discussions, it is clear these differences will require more time to be worked out.

So today I am directing the Department of Justice to seal all the materials recovered

from Congressman Jefferson's office for the next 45 days and not to allow access to anyone involved in the investigation. I am also ordering the sealed materials to remain under the custody of the Solicitor General, who heads a separate office within the Justice Department and is not involved in the investigation.

This period will provide both parties more time to resolve the issues in a way that ensures that materials relevant to the ongoing criminal investigation are made available to prosecutors in a manner that respects the interests of a coequal branch of Government. The Justice Department and the House of Representatives should continue their discussions and resolve this matter as quickly as possible.

Let me be clear: Investigating and prosecuting crime is a crucial executive responsibility that I take seriously. Those who violate the law—including a Member of Congress—should and will be held to account. This investigation will go forward, and justice will be served.