

veto authority. It has been approved previously. Forty-three Governors have this line-item veto in their States. Now it's time to bring this important tool for fiscal discipline to Washington, DC.

I'm really optimistic about the future of this country. I don't think there's any problem we can't tackle. It's really important as we put progrowth policies in place, to understand that the engine of growth is the ingenuity of the American people. I like to remind people: Government doesn't create wealth. Government creates an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can flourish, in which people can realize their dreams, in which small businesses can grow to be big businesses, in which the

newly arrived can have a chance to realize the great promise of our country.

Eddie understands that, and that's why I'm proud to have him by my side. And again, Eddie, thank you for agreeing to serve our great Nation. And now Andy Card will administer the oath of office.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Victoria Lazear, wife of Edward P. Lazear, and their daughter, Julie; Ben S. Bernanke, Chairman, Federal Reserve System; and Anne Ryun, wife of Representative Jim Ryun. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Chairman Lazear.

Statement on Representative William M. Thomas's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

March 6, 2006

Congressman Bill Thomas is a friend and a man of great accomplishment who has been a very effective leader in the House of Representatives. As chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, he helped pass legislation that has brought about strong job creation and economic growth, improved health care for people of all ages, and ensured that America continues to benefit from free and fair trade.

For the last 28 years, he has worked tirelessly for the people of the Bakersfield area in California and represented them with honor and distinction. I appreciate Bill's commitment and dedication to public service, and I look forward to working with him for the remainder of the session. I wish Sharon, Bill, and the entire Thomas family all the best in the future.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Legislative Proposal To Give the President a Line-Item Veto

March 6, 2006

To the Congress of the United States:

In my State of the Union Address, I asked the Congress to give the President a line item veto. Today, I am sending the Congress a legislative proposal to give the

President line item authority to reduce wasteful spending. This legislation will help to limit spending and ensure accountability and transparency in the expenditure of taxpayer funds.

Although the Congress achieved significant spending restraint this past year, appropriations and other bills that are sent to my desk still contain spending that is not fully justified, is a low priority, or is earmarked to avoid the discipline of competitive or merit-based reviews. When this legislation is presented to me, I now have no ability to line out unnecessary spending. In 1996, the Congress gave the President a line item veto—an important tool to limit wasteful spending—but the Supreme Court struck down that version of the law in 1998.

My proposed legislation, the “Legislative Line Item Veto Act of 2006,” would provide a fast-track procedure to require the Congress to vote up-or-down on rescissions proposed by the President. There has been broad bipartisan support for similar proposals in the past. Under this proposal, the President could propose legislation to re-

scind wasteful spending, and the Congress would be obligated to vote quickly on that package of rescissions, without amendment. The same procedure would apply to new mandatory spending and to special interest tax breaks given to small numbers of individuals.

Forty-three Governors have a line item veto to reduce spending. The President needs similar authority to help control unjustified and wasteful spending in the Federal budget. I urge you to promptly consider and send me this legislation for enactment to reduce unnecessary spending and help achieve my goal of cutting the deficit in half by 2009.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
March 6, 2006.

Remarks at a Celebration of Women’s History Month and International Women’s Day March 7, 2006

Thank you all. Thank you, Laura. Welcome to the White House. We like to call this the people’s house. I want to remind people from around the world that we’re only temporary occupants here, but we’re trying to make the most of our time here.

I want to welcome you all as we celebrate Women’s History Month and International Women’s Day. Thanks for coming. We recognize the many contributions women have made to our country. We also honor those who have helped bring equality and freedom to women around the world.

A lot of strong women have influenced my life—[laughter]—beginning with my mother. [Laughter] She told me to say that, by the way. [Laughter] I am blessed to have a strong wife. And we are raising two young women to become independent, ca-

pable risk takers—[laughter]—so that they can realize their dreams.

I have been blessed to have strong women in my Government. My administration is better off to have really capable women who feel comfortable marching in the Oval Office and giving the President their frank advice. [Laughter]

I want to thank Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao, who is with us; Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings—she’s been giving me frank advice ever since I was the Governor of Texas. [Laughter] I want to thank Karen Hughes—Ambassador Karen Hughes, the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. She’s been really giving me a lot of advice. [Laughter] Paula Dobriansky, the Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs; Harriet Miers, my attorney—by the