

Remarks Following a Meeting on Immigration Reform *March 23, 2006*

I've just had a very constructive and important dialog with members of the agricultural community, the faith community, the concerned citizen community about immigration. Ours is a nation of law, and ours is a nation of immigrants, and we believe that we can have rational, important immigration policy that's based upon law and reflects our deep desire to be a compassionate and decent nation.

Our Government must enforce our borders; we've got plans in place to do so. But part of enforcing our borders is to have a guest-worker program that encourages people to register their presence so that we know who they are, and says to them, "If you're doing a job an American won't do, you're welcome here, for a period of time, to do that job."

The immigration debate is a vital debate for our country. It's important that we have a serious debate, one that discusses the issues. But I urge Members of Congress and I urge people who like to comment on this issue to make sure the rhetoric is in accord with our traditions. I look around the table and I recognize that we've got people from different backgrounds, different heritages. We all may have different

family histories, but we all sit around this table as Americans.

And therefore, when we conduct this debate, it must be done in a civil way. It must be done in a way that brings dignity to the process. It must be done in a way that doesn't pit one group of people against another. It must be done in a way that recognizes our history. I think now is the time for the United States Congress to act to get an immigration plan that is comprehensive and rational and achieves important objectives.

So I want to welcome you all for being here. I want to thank you very much for your involvement in this vital issue. I've assured folks here at the table that I will continue to speak out on the issue. I feel passionately about the need for our country to conduct themselves with dignity and, at the same time, enforce our border and treat people here with respect.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:37 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Signing a Bill To Authorize the Extension of Nondiscriminatory Treatment to the Products of Ukraine *March 23, 2006*

Thank you. Pleased be seated. Ambassador, good to see you. Please be seated. Welcome. Appreciate you all coming. In a few minutes, I'm going to sign a bill that authorizes permanent normal trade relations between the United States and Ukraine. It's a good bill, and it's going to strengthen our ties with our friend Ukraine.

It's going to create new opportunities, economic opportunities, for both our countries.

I really want to thank the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a man who knows what he's talking about when it comes to the world, and that's Chairman Lugar from Indiana. Thank you for coming, sir. I thank the bill sponsor,