

we'll meet our responsibilities so long as we continue to trust in God's purposes. During our time in the White House, Laura and I have been blessed by the prayers of countless Americans, including many in this room. It's really an amazing country where people walk up to you, say, "Mr. President, I pray for you"—expecting to say, "Mr. President, I'd like a bridge." [Laughter] But instead, they say, "I pray for you and your family." It uplifts us, and I want to thank you for that from the bottom of our hearts.

I ask for your prayers again, that our Nation may always be an inspiration to those who believe that God made every

man, woman, and child for freedom. It is such an honor to be here. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:30 a.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Most Rev. Jose H. Gomez, Archbishop of San Antonio, who introduced the President; Theodore E. Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington; Anthony J. Cardinal Bevilacqua, Archbishop Emeritus of Philadelphia; Jane M. Roberts, wife of Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr.; and Suzanne M. Nicholson, wife of Secretary of Veterans Affairs R. James Nicholson.

## Remarks on the National Economy *April 7, 2006*

Good morning. This morning's economic report shows that America's growing economy added 211,000 jobs in the month of March. The American economy has now added jobs for 31 months in a row, created more than 5.1 million new jobs for American workers. The unemployment rate is now down to 4.7 percent; that's below the average rate of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

These millions of new jobs are evidence of an economic resurgence that is strong, broad, and benefiting all Americans. Real after-tax income has grown by more than 8 percent per person since I took office. That means, on average, Americans have an income that is \$2,100 higher this year than it was in 2001, after adjusting for inflation.

More Americans own their homes than at any time in history. Minority homeownership has reached record levels. Consumer confidence is at its highest point in nearly 40 years. Productivity is high; inflation is contained; manufacturing activity is grow-

ing; and the small-business sector is thriving.

The economy has expanded for 17 straight quarters. And last year, the American economy grew at a healthy rate of 3.5 percent. That's the fastest rate of any major industrialized economy.

These gains are the result of the energy and the effort of American workers, small-business owners, and entrepreneurs. They are also the result of progrowth economic policies. The tax cuts I signed left \$880 billion with our Nation's workers, small-business owners, and families. They've used that money to fuel our economic resurgence.

Not everyone in Washington agreed with the decision to let people keep more of their own money. On the day that Republicans in the House and Senate were finalizing the 2003 tax cuts, one Democratic leader said these cuts would, quote, "do nothing to create jobs." Facts have proven the critics wrong 5.1 million times over.

Tax relief has done exactly what it was designed to do. It's created jobs and growth

for the American people. Yet some are now proposing that we raise taxes, either by repealing the tax cuts or letting them expire. These are the same politicians who told us that letting Americans—letting America's working families keep more of their own money would be irresponsible, reckless, and shameful. They were wrong then, and they are wrong now. Our economy grows when the American people make the decisions about how to save, spend, and invest their money. To keep our economy creating jobs and opportunity, Congress needs to show its trust in the American people and make the tax relief permanent.

Congress also needs to restrain spending so we can stay on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009. And if necessary, I will enforce spending restraint through the exercise of the veto. The American people expect their leaders to address other key leaders—that directly affect their family budgets and bottom line, especially health care and energy.

When the cost of energy and health care rise, families are squeezed and small businesses suffer. I proposed practical reforms that would make health care more available and affordable. I put forward an energy initiative that will make our dependence on Middle Eastern oil a thing of the past. I've also laid out a plan to make America more competitive by increasing our investment in scientific research, encouraging research and development in the private sector, and improving math and science education.

I urge the Congress to move forward on all these important priorities so we can keep America the economic leader of the world and allow more families and small businesses to realize the American Dream.

Thank you for your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:32 a.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House.

## The President's Radio Address *April 8, 2006*

Good morning. This week, Members of the United States Senate reached a promising bipartisan compromise on comprehensive immigration reform. Unfortunately, this compromise is being blocked by the Senate Democratic leader, who has refused to allow Senators to move forward and vote on amendments to this bill. I call on the Senate minority leader to end his blocking tactics and allow the Senate to do its work and pass a fair, effective immigration reform bill.

Immigration is an emotional issue and a vitally important one. At its core, immigration is the sign of a confident and successful nation. It says something about our country that people around the world are willing to leave their homes, leave their

families, and risk everything to come to America. Their talent, hard work, and love of freedom have helped make America a vibrant, strong nation. And by reforming our immigration laws to meet the realities of the 21st century, we will ensure that America remains a beacon of liberty for generations to come.

I made clear that a comprehensive immigration reform bill must include three elements. First, comprehensive immigration reform must secure our borders. Since I took office, we've increased funding for border security by 66 percent, and Federal agents have apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering this country illegally, including more than 400,000 with criminal records. To improve