

businesspeople. See, I believe we can compete with anybody, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

And so these mayors who are living close to the people understand that by opening up markets, businesses in their communities and workers in their communities will benefit. And I want to thank you all for coming. We have a good opportunity to get the deal done, and I'm looking forward

to working with Congress to get these packages passed. These are progrowth, and they're good for America. And thanks for giving Secretary Gutierrez and I a chance to visit with you.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Statement on Signing an Executive Order To Reform How the United States Reviews National Security Concerns That May Arise From Foreign Investments

January 23, 2008

Today I issued an Executive order reforming how the United States reviews national security concerns that may arise from foreign investments, in light of the Foreign Investment and National Security Act of 2007. The Executive order furthers the goals of the new law by ensuring that the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States will review carefully the national security concerns, if any, raised by certain foreign investments into the United States. The Executive order reaffirms our

commitment to open economies and our policy of welcoming foreign investment and the important economic benefits that such investment brings. At the same time, the Executive order sets forth procedures for protecting our national security, recognizing that our openness is vital to our prosperity and security.

NOTE: The statement referred to Executive Order 13456, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on a Bipartisan Economic Growth Agreement

January 24, 2008

This morning my administration reached an agreement with Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Boehner on an economic growth package. And, Mr. Secretary, thank you for handling negotiations, and appreciate your hard work.

This agreement was the result of intensive discussions and many phone calls, late-night meetings, and the kind of cooperation that some predicted was not possible here

in Washington. It also required patience, determination, and good will. I thank the Speaker and I thank Leader Boehner for their hard work and for their leadership and for showing the American people that we can come together to help our Nation deal with difficult economic challenges.

I am pleased that this agreement meets the criterion that I set forth last week to provide an effective, robust, and temporary

set of incentives that will boost our economy and encourage job creation. This package has the right set of policies and is the right size. The incentives in this package will lead to higher consumer spending and increased business investment this year. Importantly, this package recognizes that lowering taxes is a powerful and efficient way to help consumers and businesses. I have always believed that allowing people to keep more of their own money and to use it as they see fit is the best way to help our economy grow.

I'm also pleased that this agreement does not include any tax increases as well as unnecessary spending projects that would have little immediate impact on our economy.

I know Americans are concerned about our economic future. Our economy is structurally sound, but it is dealing with short-term disruptions in the housing market and the impact of higher energy prices. These challenges are slowing growth. Yet Americans can also be confident about our long-

term outlook. Our economy is strong, it is dynamic, and it is resilient. It has led the world for many decades, and with the right policies in place, including the extension of the tax cuts passed in 2001 and 2003 that have helped our economy, I firmly believe we're going to continue to lead the world.

Because the country needs this boost to the economy now, I urge the House and the Senate to enact this economic growth agreement into law as soon as possible. We have an opportunity to come together and take the swift, decisive action our economy urgently needs.

Secretary Paulson is here to answer any of your questions. At my request, he has taken the lead in negotiations, like I mentioned, and I—you did a superb job, Mr. Secretary. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:31 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Elsa Morejon January 24, 2008

The President. A while ago I had the honor of presenting the National Medal of Freedom to a patriot of Cuba and a lover of liberty, Oscar Biscet. He was not able to receive the award because he's in a Cuban prison for speaking out on behalf of human rights and human dignity. Today his wife Elsa Morejon is here. She has taken some time from Cuba to come to the United States to visit her son. She came up to the Oval Office to see me, and I'm most honored and most grateful.

We have a comfortable life here in America by and large, and it's hard for us to imagine what it would be like for—to live in a society as repressive as the society of Fidel and Raul Castro. This good

woman has had to suffer through days and weeks of deprivation and worry because the love of her life is in a Cuban prison simply because of his beliefs. It's my honor to welcome you here.

My call is for the world to help women such as Elsa. My call is for those who believe that the Cuba of today is a hopeful place to recognize the realities. This is a country that has got political prisoners who are languishing in the jails, who are mistreated in the jails. Our message is, is that political prisoners ought to be free and so should the Cuban people, free to express themselves and free to realize their God-given talents. So I want to welcome you. *Que Dios le bendiga.*