

fixing to go up—which it is, unless Congress acts; it will be going up in a couple of years—it could change your behavior. It could cause people to pull back and not be confident about the future.

And I also called on them to stop this business about putting special projects in legislation without being voted on. That doesn't make any sense. I mean, our process is one where there should be transparency and—like, if a project is important enough for a Member of Congress to slip into what's called a conference report, that project ought to be important enough for there to be a full vote—Members of Congress get to look at it and see if it makes any sense.

So I've got an agenda for Congress. I'm looking forward to working with them on

how to stimulate the economy in the short term, but make sure we remain a strong economy in the long term. And I'm looking forward to working with them. I like the spirit I found up in the Halls of Congress. There's still a little politics in Washington, DC, but that's not to say we can't work for the common good.

And I appreciate you all giving me a chance to come by and visit with you. I hope you can tell I'm optimistic about the future of the country, realistic about the issues we face, and have—got a plan to deal with them. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:47 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Donald J. Hall, Jr., president and chief executive officer, Hallmark Cards, Inc.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report Relating to the Interdiction of Aircraft Engaged in Illicit Drug Trafficking *January 31, 2008*

*Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

Consistent with the authorities relating to official immunity in the interdiction of aircraft engaged in illicit drug trafficking (Public Law 107–108, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2291–4), and in order to keep the Congress fully informed, I am providing a report prepared by my Administration. This report includes matters relating to the

interdiction of aircraft engaged in illicit drug trafficking.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 4.

## Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting *February 4, 2008*

Thank you all for coming. I just met with my Cabinet, where we discussed a lot of issues. And one issue we discussed was the budget. I submitted the budget

today to Congress. It's on a laptop notebook, an e-budget. It saves paper, saves trees, saves money. I think it's the first budget submitted electronically.

And it's a good budget. It's a budget that achieves some important objectives. One, it understands our top priority is to defend our country, so we fund our military, as well as fund the homeland security.

Secondly, the budget keeps our economy growing. It's central that we make sure that we deal with the uncertainties—the economic uncertainties we face. And that's why we're working hard with the House and the Senate to get a growth package out quickly that will put money in the hands of consumers and provide incentives to small businesses and large businesses to invest.

Thirdly, we recognize that in order for this economy to grow, it's important to make the tax relief permanent. And that's what this budget reflects. It's a budget that boosts money for education and health and housing. It helps deal with the issue of making the Tax Code more fair for individuals who want to buy health insurance in the individual market.

This budget is one that keeps spending under control; discretionary spending is held to less than 1 percent. It eliminates 151 wasteful or bloated programs, saving

the taxpayers \$18 billion. It also takes a hard look at entitlement growth over the next 5 years and provides specific recommendations to save \$208 billion over those 5 years. At the same time, the budget achieves balance by 2012.

This is a good, solid budget. It's not only an innovative budget, in that it's coming to Congress over the Internet, it's a budget that's balanced—it gets to balance in 2012 and saves taxpayers money.

You know, in my State of the Union, I said to the Congress that there's a lot of talk about entitlement spending. Once again, we've proposed specific reforms and specific measures. And Congress needs to come up with its own ideas. And Congress needs to respond to these looming deficits as a result of unfunded liabilities inherent in Social Security and Medicare. Our budget does that. Our budget protects America and encourages economic growth. Congress needs to pass it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:57 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

## Remarks Honoring the 2007 NASCAR Nextel Cup Champion February 5, 2008

*The President.* You know, one of the things I love about NASCAR is not only are these great athletes, but they're socially minded folks. And Chandra and Jimmie and I met several times—one time at a place where the folks of NASCAR are putting something back into the community to help the less fortunate. In this case, it happened to be in a place called Victory Junction in North Carolina, and it was a fabulous experience. And I want to thank

you all very much for taking your fame and lending it to help somebody in need. It's really what makes America a great place. And you're leaders on the track and leaders off the track.

*Jimmie Johnson.* Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:09 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to NASCAR driver Jimmie Johnson and his wife Chandra.