

concerns and come together to pass this bipartisan bill and send it to my desk without delay. Our intelligence professionals and private sector partners need the certainty of long-term legislation that will allow

us to keep programs in place to protect the Nation, so that the flow of critical intelligence information is not interrupted.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 3773.

## Remarks on Intelligence Reform Legislation *February 13, 2008*

Director, thank you for joining me. Good morning. At this moment, somewhere in the world, terrorists are planning new attacks on our country. Their goal is to bring destruction to our shores that will make September the 11th pale by comparison. To carry out their plans, they must communicate with each other, they must recruit operatives, and they must share information.

The lives of countless Americans depend on our ability to monitor these communications. Our intelligence professionals must be able to find out who the terrorists are talking to, what they are saying, and what they're planning.

To help our intelligence agencies do this, Congress passed the Protect America Act last year. Unfortunately, Congress set the law to expire on February the 1st and then failed to pass new legislation that would keep these tools in effect over the long run. And so at the 11th hour, Congress passed a temporary 15-day extension of the current law, which will expire at midnight this Saturday. I signed that extension. I did so to give Members of the House and the Senate more time to work out their differences.

Well, the Senate has used this time wisely. I am pleased that last night, Senators approved new legislation that will ensure our intelligence professionals have the tools they need to make us safer, and they did so by a wide, bipartisan majority. The Senate bill also provides fair and just liability protections for companies that did the right

thing and assisted in defending America after the attacks of September the 11th.

In order to be able to discover enemy—the enemy's plans, we need the cooperation of telecommunication companies. If these companies are subjected to lawsuits that could cost them billions of dollars, they won't participate, they won't help us, they won't help protect America. Liability protection is critical to securing the private sector's cooperation with our intelligence efforts. The Senate has passed a good bill and has shown that protecting our Nation is not a partisan issue. And I congratulate the Senators.

Unfortunately, the House has failed to pass a good bill. And now House leaders say they want still more time to reach an agreement with the Senate on a final bill. They make this claim even though it is clear that the Senate bill, the bill passed last night, has significant bipartisan support in the House.

Congress has had over 6 months to discuss and deliberate. The time for debate is over. I will not accept any temporary extension. House Members have had plenty of time to pass a good bill. They have already been given a 2-week extension beyond the deadline they set for themselves. If Republicans and Democrats in the Senate can come together on a good piece of legislation, there is no reason why Republicans and Democrats in the House cannot pass the Senate bill immediately.

The House's failure to pass the bipartisan Senate bill would jeopardize the security

of our citizens. As Director McConnell has told me, without this law, our ability to prevent new attacks will be weakened, and it will become harder for us to uncover terrorist plots. We must not allow this to happen. It is time for Congress to ensure the flow of vital intelligence is not disrupted. It is time for Congress to pass a

law that provides a long-term foundation to protect our country. And they must do so immediately.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:01 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 3773.

## Remarks on Signing the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 *February 13, 2008*

Thank you all. Sit down. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Thanks for the warm welcome. I'm pleased to be joined by leaders of both parties to enact an economic growth package on behalf of the American people.

You know, a lot of folks in America probably were saying that it's impossible for those of us in Washington to find common ground, to reach compromise on important issues. I didn't feel that way; I know the leaders didn't feel that way. And as a result, we have come together on a single mission, and that is to put the people's interests first. And I really do welcome the Members of Congress, and I thank you for your hard work.

Madame Speaker, I thank you for your leadership. Senator Reid, I thank you for your leadership as well. I appreciate very much the fact that the Vice President has joined us, along with Congressman Boehner, Congressman Hoyer, Senator Mitch McConnell, Congressman Roy Blunt, Congressman Jim Clyburn, and other Members of the House and the Senate. You're welcome here in the people's house any time.

I'm very grateful that members of my Cabinet have joined us. Secretary Paulson was the leader in the negotiations on this, and I thank you very much for your hard work, Mr. Secretary. You're earning your pay. *[Laughter]* Appreciate other members of my Cabinet who have joined us as well.

You know, I know a lot of Americans are concerned about our economic future. Our overall economy has grown for 6 straight years, but that growth has clearly slowed. And so in January, I—we had an important phone call with the leaders of the Congress to talk about whether or not we could come together to provide a booster shot for our economy: a package that is robust, temporary, and puts money back into the hands of American workers and businesses.

Congress passed a really good piece of legislation, and they did so in a very expeditious manner. The bill I'm signing today is large enough to have an impact, amounting to more than \$152 billion this year, or about 1 percent of GDP. The bill provides temporary tax incentives for businesses to make investments in their companies so that we create new jobs this year. The bill provides individual tax relief in the form of tax rebates. These rebates will amount to as much as \$600 for individuals and \$1,200 for married couples, with additional rebates for families with children.

The Members resisted the temptation to load up this bill with unrelated programs or unnecessary spending, and I appreciate that. I thank the Members for acting quickly. I thank them for acting to provide immediate tax relief to the American people.

There are other ways we can work together to help our economy through this