

and track the progress of every project under-way.

And that's why I'm pleased to hear that in State after State across America, competition for these projects is so fierce, and contractors are doing such a good job cutting costs, that projects are consistently coming in under budget. The final bid for one road project in Connecticut was \$8.4 million less than the State budgeted for. Another one in Louisiana was \$4.7 million less. A project at BWI Airport will be completed for \$8 million less than expected. Bids for projects in North Carolina have been 19 percent under budget. Colorado is reporting bids up to 30 percent less than they expected. And the officials in California have seen bids that are close to half as much as they had projected.

And because these projects are proceeding so efficiently, we now have more recovery dollars to go around. And that means we can fund more projects, revitalize more of our infrastructure, put more people back to work, and ensure that taxpayers get more value for their dollars.

Now, I have no illusion about how much work lies ahead and how hard it will be. The road to recovery is long; we will undoubtedly make some mistakes, we'll face some setbacks along the way, there will be some projects that don't work the way we want them to. But it is now clear that we're heading in the right direction. It's now clear that day by day, project by project, we are making progress.

We're doing what we've always done in this country. As President Johnson said more than 40 years ago when he signed the legislation

creating this Department, the Department of Transportation, "America's history is a history of her transportation," of railroads that pushed frontiers, and waterways and highways that opened up markets, airplanes that connected us to one another and to the world.

Throughout our history, there have been times when a generation of Americans seized the chance to remake the face of this Nation. And this is one of those times. And that's what we're doing today, building a 21st century infrastructure that will create jobs, spur growth, and sustain an economy that creates shared and lasting prosperity.

So thank you to the folks here at DOT; you're doing an outstanding job. Thanks to Ray LaHood for being a terrific leader of the Department. And thank you to Joe Biden for helping to drive this thing home. And thanks to all the workers who are standing behind us. We don't want to keep them too long. They've already got their hard hats. *[Laughter]* They are going to go straight into their cars, and they're going to go back to work. So thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:52 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Richard Phillips, captain, MV *Maersk Alabama*, who was rescued from pirates off the coast of Somalia on April 12, and his wife Andrea; and Interior Department Inspector General Earl E. Devaney, Chair, Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Joe Biden.

Statement on the Month of the Military Child *April 13, 2009*

In 1986, April was designated as the Month of the Military Child, and I am proud to mark the special recognition the Department of Defense has given to military children.

Like all Americans, I am grateful to the brave men and women in uniform who are serving our Nation. They are the living embodiment of the ideals of sacrifice, honor, and duty that have always made this Nation great,

and their sacrifice is their families' sacrifice too; their children, especially, display tremendous strength and courage each day, bravely bearing the burden of having a loved one serving in harm's way. They may move many times across the Nation and even around the world as they grow up. They may not see their loved ones for months on end. It is not easy, and Michelle and I, as well as the Vice President and

Dr. Jill Biden, admire and are deeply grateful to each and every one of them.

I call on all Americans to keep military children in their thoughts and prayers and to do

their part to reach out to and support them and their families.

NOTE: The statement referred to Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden.

Memorandum on Promoting Democracy and Human Rights in Cuba April 13, 2009

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of Commerce

Subject: Promoting Democracy and Human Rights in Cuba

The promotion of democracy and human rights in Cuba is in the national interest of the United States and is a key component of this Nation's foreign policy in the Americas. Measures that decrease dependency of the Cuban people on the Castro regime and that promote contacts between Cuban-Americans and their relatives in Cuba are means to encourage positive change in Cuba. The United States can pursue these goals by facilitating greater contact between separated family members in the United States and Cuba and increasing the flow of remittances and information to the Cuban people.

To pursue those ends, I direct the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions as necessary to:

(a) Lift restrictions on travel-related transactions for visits to a person's family member who is a national of Cuba by authorizing such transactions by a general license that shall:

- Define family members who may be visited to be persons within three degrees of family relationship (e.g., second cousins) and to allow individuals who share a common dwelling as a family with an authorized traveler to accompany them;
- Remove limitations on the frequency of visits;
- Remove limitations on the duration of a visit;

- Authorize expenditure amounts that are the same as non-family travel; and
- Remove the 44-pound limitation on accompanied baggage.

(b) Remove restrictions on remittances to a person's family member in Cuba by:

- Authorizing remittances to individuals within three degrees of family relationship (e.g., second cousins) provided that no remittances shall be authorized to currently prohibited members of the Government of Cuba or currently prohibited members of the Cuban Communist Party; Removing limits on frequency of remittances;
- Removing limits on the amount of remittances;
- Authorizing travelers to carry up to \$3,000 in remittances; and
- Establishing general license for banks and other depository institutions to forward remittances.

(c) Authorize U.S. telecommunications network providers to enter into agreements to establish fiber-optic cable and satellite telecommunications facilities linking the United States and Cuba.

(d) License U.S. telecommunications service providers to enter into and operate under roaming service agreements with Cuba's telecommunications service providers.

(e) License U.S. satellite radio and satellite television service providers to engage in transactions necessary to provide services to customers in Cuba.

(f) License persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction to activate and pay U.S. and third-country service providers for telecommunications,