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and Social Security, and pays down a record amount of debt.

I applaud today's action and congratulate the Republicans and Democrats who helped make it happen.

Message on the Observance of Passover

April 6, 2001

I am pleased to send warm greetings to Jews around the world celebrating the Passover holiday, beginning at sundown on April 7. As you gather with family and friends, eat traditional foods, and sing joyous songs, you follow in the footsteps of your forefathers in remembering the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt nearly 3,500 years ago.

During this season of renewal, the Passover holiday commemorates the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery. Through the years, Jewish sages have taught that the lesson of freedom found in the miracle of Passover has two important aspects. The first is the escape from physical bondage and the regaining of dignity and equality by the individual and by a people. Equally important is spiritual liberation from selfish desires and destructive habits.

The flight from slavery led quickly to Mount Sinai and the Holy One's gift of the Commandments to Moses and the Israelites. They were then fully free to follow the Creator's laws in striving to perfect their own lives and the world in which they lived. The connection between freedom from bondage and the gift of the Commandments enhances Passover's abiding influence, not only as a Jewish holiday, but also as an inspiration to all mankind.

Laura joins me in sending best wishes for a joyous and memorable holiday observance.

George W. Bush

Executive Order 13208—Amendment to Executive Order 13202, Preservation of Open Competition and Government Neutrality Towards Government Contractors' Labor Relations on Federal and Federally Funded Construction Projects

April 6, 2001

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act, 40 U.S.C. 471 *et seq*., and in order to (1) promote and ensure open competition on Federal and federally funded or assisted construction projects; (2) maintain Government neutrality towards Government contractors' labor relations on Federal and federally funded or assisted construction projects; (3) reduce construction costs to the Federal Government and to the tax payers; (4) expand job opportunities, especially for small and disadvantaged businesses; (5) prevent discrimination against Government contractors or their employees based upon labor affiliation or lack thereof; and (6) prevent the inefficiency that may result from the disruption of a previously established contractual relationship in particular cases; thereby promoting the economical, nondiscriminatory, and efficient administration and completion of Federal and federally funded or assisted construction projects, it is hereby ordered that Executive Order 13202 of February 17, 2001, is amended by adding to section 5 of that order the following new subsection:

(c) The head of an executive agency, upon application of an awarding authority, a recipient of grants or financial assistance, a party to a cooperative agreement, or a construction manager acting on behalf of the foregoing, may exempt a particular project from the requirements of any or all of the provisions of sections 1 and 3 of this order, if the agency head finds: (i) that