

Listen, we want to make sure anybody who is honestly injured ought to have their day in court, of course. And bad doctors ought to be held to account. But medical liability is like a lottery, and they're filing lawsuit after lawsuit after lawsuit, which causes premiums to go up, which means your bills go up. And it means many doctors in hospitals practice preventative medicine, which means they prescribe more than is necessary in order to make sure they cover themselves in case of a lawsuit, which causes your costs to go up. And in a lot of places, docs just quit practicing, which is not good for America.

Medical liability is a national issue—it drives the Medicaid budget; it drives the Medicare budget; it drives the veterans budget—and it requires a national solution. We've got a good bill out of the United States House of Representatives. We need to get it out of the United States Senate. And I would urge you to contact your United States Senators, one of whom I think is a pretty good vote on this issue.

We're worried about regulation on small business in Washington, DC. We understand what regulation does to our small businesses. I believe in associated health care plans for small businesses, to allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional lines so as to reduce the cost to small businesses and their employees. The House is taking this bill up today—timely subject. I hope they pass it. And when they do, the United States Senate must act for the sake of affordable health care for the employees of small businesses all across this country.

And finally, we've got another issue, and that's the issue of energy. For the sake of this economy, we need an energy plan. Listen, I came to this good State and laid out an energy plan for Congress to consider. It was a plan that said we can do a better job of conservation, and we need to do that. We need to unleash new technologies.

But we've got a—we've got a problem with natural gas here in America. The demand for natural gas is going up, but the supply isn't. And any time the demand for a product is going up and the supply is not going up, the price goes up. And our policy thus far on exploration for natural gas has not been very consumer-friendly. There's been a lot of false

science put out about what exploration for natural gas would do to certain parts of our country.

We're a technologically capable nation. We can explore for natural gas and protect our environment. We need a energy policy. We need an energy policy that not only helps the economic security of the United States; we need an energy policy that helps our national security, an energy policy which makes us less reliant on foreign sources of energy.

And we've got a lot ahead of us to do, but I'm anxious to do the job that you want me to do. And I believe we can get that done. I believe it. Listen, I've seen this great spirit of this country. I've seen the determination of the American people, the fierce courage of those who wear our uniform, the love and compassion of those who are neighborhood healers and helpers. Now, we're lucky people to live in America. There is no challenge that we can't overcome. There's nothing we can't do when we put our mind to it. And I firmly believe because of the character of the American people, this world will be more peaceful; America will be more secure; and the people that live in this country will be more hopeful.

I want to thank you all for coming today. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:11 p.m. in the warehouse at Micro Control Co. In his remarks, he referred to Harold Hamilton, owner, Micro Control Co., and his wife, Eleanor; State Auditor Patricia Awada and Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau of Minnesota; Minnesota House of Representatives Speaker Steve Sviggum; Minnesota Senate Majority Leader John C. Hottinger; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Brian Dahl, owner, Capital Wood Products; and Tim Rashleger, owner, Milltronics Manufacturing.

Statement on Congressional Action on Volunteer Service and National Service Legislation

June 19, 2003

I commend Congress, particularly Senators Bond and Mikulski and Representatives Boehner and Hoekstra, for working with my administration and taking swift action to pass the "Strengthen AmeriCorps Program Act."

The bill establishes accounting guidelines for the Corporation for National and Community Service that will help put AmeriCorps on a sound financial footing. It is also the essential first step toward maximizing enrollment this year to benefit the nonprofit organizations that count on AmeriCorps members to offer help and hope to people in communities across the country.

I hope Congress will continue to show strong support for my effort to help every American answer the call to volunteer service and act quickly to strengthen and expand national service by passing the "Citizen Service Act."

Message on the Observance of Juneteenth, 2003

June 19, 2003

I send greetings to those celebrating Juneteenth.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be, free." This news reached slaves slowly as word was passed by Union soldiers and individual plantation owners. Almost two years later, on June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, to declare the end of the Civil War and the freedom of the slaves.

Juneteenth commemorates General Granger's announcement and provides an opportunity for people across America to celebrate the end of slavery and the joy of freedom. On this day, I encourage all citizens to learn more about the rich heritage of African Americans and their many contributions to our Nation. With knowledge and understanding, we will continue our efforts to ensure that our society provides the opportunity for every person, of every race, to realize the promise of America.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a memorable celebration.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil

June 20, 2003

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome the President of our friend Brazil to the Oval Office. This is the third meeting I will have held with the President. It shows how important our relationship is. Brazil is an incredibly important part of a peaceful and prosperous North and South America. I can say that, from the perspective of the United States, this relationship is a vital and important and growing relationship.

On a personal perspective, I'm very impressed by the vision of the President of Brazil. He's a man who clearly has deep concerns for all the people of Brazil. He not only has a tremendous heart, but he's got the abilities to work closely with his Government and the people of Brazil to encourage prosperity and to end hunger. And today the people of both our countries will see a series of initiatives on a variety of fronts, which indicate that this relationship is a mature relationship and an important relationship.

And Mr. President, I'm honored you're here with us today. Welcome. Thank you, sir.

President Lula da Silva. I think that it's very important in our third meeting that we should make it clear to the public opinion—to Brazilian and American public opinion—about the relationship between Brazil and the United States. It is a very strong relationship that has been in existence for a long period. I always believe that it is possible to even improve more these relationships. Since the last time I was here, on December the 10th of last year, still as President-elect, I went back to Brazil with a certainty that Brazil and the United States do have the possibility—can have the most profitable relationship with the United States. And this relationship between Brazil and the United States should be on the basis of sincerity between people, on the reliability that the leadership must have, and not just build up a spectacle for the press and for the public.

I learned during my past life to—I learned how to deal with people on the basis of trust. And I believe that Brazil is and can continue to be a good partner of the United States.