

**Statement on Senate Confirmation of Samuel A. Alito, Jr., To Be an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court**

*January 31, 2006*

I am pleased that the Senate has voted to confirm Judge Sam Alito as the 110th Justice of the Supreme Court. Sam Alito is a brilliant and fair-minded judge who strictly interprets the Constitution and laws and does not legislate from the bench. He is a man of deep character and integrity, and he will make all Americans proud as a Justice on our highest Court. The son of an Italian immigrant, Judge Alito's appointment to the Supreme Court is the realization of the American dream for this good man and his family. I congratulate Judge Alito, his wife, Martha, the Alito children, and Judge Alito's mother, Rose, on this historic achievement and momentous day in the life of our country.

Judge Alito replaces Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Justice O'Connor was the first woman ever to sit on the Supreme Court, and she is one of the most admired Americans of our time or any time. Our Nation is grateful to Justice O'Connor for her extraordinary and dedicated public service, and Laura and I wish her and John all the best.

**Statement on Senate Confirmation of Ben S. Bernanke To Be Chairman of the Federal Reserve System**

*January 31, 2006*

I am pleased that the Senate has voted to confirm Ben Bernanke to be the next Chairman of the Federal Reserve. Ben is a man of impeccable credentials, sound policy judgment, and strong character—and he will make an outstanding Chairman. Ben has provided wise counsel and good advice as a member of my economic team, and he will serve our Nation with great distinction at the Federal Reserve.

America's economy is strong for a lot of reasons, and one reason is the excellent work done by the men and women of the Federal Reserve. Under the leadership of Chairman Ben Bernanke, the Federal Reserve will con-

tinue to help provide Americans with a high quality of living.

**Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union**

*January 31, 2006*

Thank you all. Mr. Speaker, Vice President Cheney, Members of Congress, members of the Supreme Court and diplomatic corps, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens: Today our Nation lost a beloved, graceful, courageous woman who called America to its founding ideals and carried on a noble dream. Tonight we are comforted by the hope of a glad reunion with the husband who was taken so long ago, and we are grateful for the good life of Coretta Scott King.

Every time I'm invited to this rostrum, I'm humbled by the privilege and mindful of the history we've seen together. We have gathered under this Capitol dome in moments of national mourning and national achievement. We have served America through one of the most consequential periods of our history, and it has been my honor to serve with you.

In a system of two parties, two chambers, and two elected branches, there will always be differences and debate. But even tough debates can be conducted in a civil tone, and our differences cannot be allowed to harden into anger. To confront the great issues before us, we must act in a spirit of goodwill and respect for one another—and I will do my part. Tonight the state of our Union is strong, and together we will make it stronger.

In this decisive year, you and I will make choices that determine both the future and the character of our country. We will choose to act confidently in pursuing the enemies of freedom, or retreat from our duties in the hope of an easier life. We will choose to build our prosperity by leading the world economy, or shut ourselves off from trade and opportunity. In a complex and challenging time, the road of isolationism and protectionism may seem broad and inviting, yet it ends in danger and decline. The only way to protect our people, the only way to secure the peace, the only way to control our destiny is by our