

boomer retirements on Medicare and Medicaid as well as Social Security. The commission will include Members of Congress from both political parties. It will recommend long-term solutions that will keep the promise of these vital programs while addressing their growing costs. I look forward to working with Congress to get this problem solved for generations to come.

As the Deficit Reduction Act delivers savings in mandatory spending, it also shows the compassion of America. This bill provides new resources for programs that serve some of our citizens with the greatest needs—including hurricane victims, children, and low-income families struggling to pay their heating bills.

The Deficit Reduction Act makes important improvements to Federal student loan programs. The bill cuts excess Government subsidies to lenders and makes other reforms that will help us reduce overall student loan costs by about \$22 billion. With that money, we will save the taxpayers \$12 billion—because we intend to increase student aid by 10 additional billion dollars. What I'm telling you is, the students are getting the money, and we're making the program a lot more efficient for the taxpayers.

The Deficit Reduction Act also reauthorizes welfare reform for another 5 years. Welfare reform has proved a tremendous success over the past decade. By insisting on programs that require work and self-sufficiency in return for Federal aid, we've helped cut welfare cases by more than half since 1996. Now we're building on that progress by renewing welfare reform with a billion-dollar increase in child care funding and new grants to support healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs.

One of the reasons for the success of welfare reform is a policy called charitable choice which allows faith-based groups that provide social services to receive Federal funding without changing the way they hire. Ten years ago, Congress made welfare the first Federal program to include charitable choice. The bill I sign today will extend charitable choice for another 5 years and expand it to the new healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs. Appreciate the hard work of all who supported the extension

of charitable choice—including the good-hearted men and women of the faith-based community who are here today. By reauthorizing welfare reform with charitable choice, we will help millions more Americans move from welfare to work and find independence and dignity and hope.

The message of the bill I sign today is straightforward: By setting priorities and making sure tax dollars are spent wisely, America can be compassionate and responsible at the same time. Spending restraint demands difficult choices, yet making those choices is what the American people sent us to Washington to do. One of our most important responsibilities is to keep this economy strong and vibrant and secure for our children and our grandchildren. We can be proud that we're helping to meet that responsibility today.

Now I ask the Members of the Congress to join me as I sign the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:31 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. S. 1932, approved February 8, was assigned Public Law No. 109-171.

Statement on Signing the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005

February 8, 2006

Today, I have signed into law S. 1932, the "Deficit Reduction Act of 2005." The Act reduces unnecessary spending of taxpayer dollars, reflecting a commitment to fiscal responsibility.

The executive branch shall construe section 1936(d)(2) of the Social Security Act as enacted by section 6034 of the Act, which purports to make consultation with a legislative agent a precondition to execution of the law, to call for but not mandate such consultation, as is consistent with the Constitution's provisions concerning the separate powers of the Congress to legislate and the President to execute the laws.

Sections 5006(b) and 5008(c) of the Act, and section 401A(a)(2)(C) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as enacted by section 8003 of the Act, call for executive branch officials to submit legislative recommendations

to the Congress. The executive branch shall construe such provisions in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President to supervise the unitary executive branch and to recommend for congressional consideration such measures as the President shall judge necessary and expedient.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 8, 2006.

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

Remarks to the National Guard Association of the United States

February 9, 2006

Thanks for that warm welcome. I'm delighted to be here with the men and women of the National Guard Association of the United States. For 128 years, the National Guard Association has been fighting for the citizen soldiers who fight for America. I appreciate your service, and I appreciate you supporting those that America depends on in times of crisis. Our Nation is safer because citizens are willing to put on the uniform and defend our freedom.

The first thing I want to tell you is America is grateful for the service of our guards men and women, and I'm proud to be their Commander in Chief.

I thank Brigadier General Bob Taylor for his service and for his introduction. I appreciate Congressman Jim Gibbons, who is with us today, from the great State of Nevada. Thanks for coming, Congressman. I'm proud you're here; thanks for supporting the Guard.

I thank Brigadier General Steve Koper, retired president of the National Guard Association of the United States. General, thank you for greeting me. I'm proud to be here with Major General Roger Lempke, the president of the Adjutants General Association. I thank my friend Lieutenant General Danny James. One of the interesting things about my life, I've been the Commander in Chief twice: today and when I was the Governor of Texas. And Danny and I worked together for the good of our State. Thanks for

coming, Danny; glad to see you brought your beautiful wife too.

I want to thank Lewis King; he's the Chief Warrant Officer, retired. He helped raise the money for this box, and I appreciate it very much, Lewis, and all those who contributed to it. I want to thank Charles Parks, the sculptor. Charles caught me before my hair went gray. *[Laughter]*

I also want to thank Lanny McNeely for joining us today; he's the head of the 147th Wing Guard at Ellington, where I used to serve. And I appreciate you coming, Colonel. Thanks for being here. Thanks for greeting me when I arrived there, on Air Force One there at Ellington—checking on my mother and father on a regular basis. I also want to thank Chuck Rodriguez, who's the TAG of Texas. When you're a Texan, you always got to make sure you pay attention to your fellow Texans.

And thank you all for having me. I want to share with you some thoughts about the war on terror. Before I do, I want to remind our country that the Guard has been fighting for America since before America was a nation. From the "First Muster" in 1636 to today's global war on terror, Americans have counted on the Guard to protect our land and defend our way of life. The role of the Guard in our military is unique. It's the only part of the Armed Forces that serves both the State and the Nation. And in the past year, Americans have witnessed the courage of our guards men and women at home and abroad.

When Hurricane Katrina struck the gulf coast last year, more than 40,000 guards men and women rushed to the impact zone—it was the largest stateside deployment in National Guard history. They conducted search and rescue operations, distributed food and water, provided emergency medical care, protected communities from criminality, and worked around the clock to repair homes and restore power. Guard units from all 50 States, three U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia provided assistance. And together, they saved lives and helped evacuate over 175,000 people stranded by the storm.

When the Pennsylvania National Guard came to repair the roof of a Louisiana woman, she said this to the soldiers: "That's