

know how to manage it best. He understands that while people here in Washington may care deeply about the land, it's the people that's closest to the land that we're going to rely upon to manage those resources. We're going to work closely with local and State leaders to ensure our natural resources are managed wisely.

Dirk takes up his new responsibilities at an important time in our Nation's history, and he follows an outstanding Secretary of the Interior in Gale Norton. Gale was instrumental in establishing the Healthy Forests Initiative to safeguard our forests and woodlands against fire damage. And thanks to her leadership, our administration has reduced the danger of fires by treating or removing hazardous fields from 11 million acres of Federal land so far. Gale also led the effort in Washington to improve our national parks and reduce the park maintenance backlog that we found when we came into office. Dirk is going to continue focusing on our national parks.

After Hurricane Katrina devastated our Nation's gulf coast, Gale helped lead the effort to restore offshore energy production. She worked tirelessly to prevent a massive energy disruption that could have crippled our economy. America is a better place because of Gale Norton's leadership.

Dirk Kempthorne is going to build upon the strong foundation left by Gale Norton. He's going to continue my administration's effort to conserve our land and water and air resources. He's going to work to improve our national parks. He's going to preserve our Nation's historic and cultural sites. He'll carry forward our approach of cooperative conservation by encouraging conservation on both public and private lands in close collaboration with local communities. As we work to reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy, he will make sure that any exploration on Federal lands and in Federal waters is done in an environmentally sensitive way. As the Secretary of the Interior, Dirk Kempthorne will make certain that our Nation's natural spaces are cleaner and safer and more productive.

I want to thank Dirk for agreeing to serve our country again. I want to thank his family for supporting him. And now it's my honor

to witness the swearing-in of Dirk Kempthorne.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Justice Antonin Scalia and Secretary Kempthorne.

Statement on Senate Action on Marriage Protection Legislation

June 7, 2006

Today's Senate vote on the marriage protection amendment marks the start of a new chapter in this important national debate. I thank the Senators who supported this amendment, but I am disappointed the Senate did not achieve the necessary number of votes to move the amendment process forward. Our Nation's founders set a high bar for amending our Constitution, and history has shown us that it can take several tries before an amendment builds the two-thirds support it needs in both houses of Congress. My position on this issue is clear: Marriage is the most fundamental institution of our society, and it should not be redefined by activist judges. The people must be heard on this issue. And as this debate continues, each American deserves to be treated with tolerance, respect, and dignity.

NOTE: The statement referred to S.J. Res. 1.

Statement on Congressional Action on the "Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act"

June 7, 2006

I applaud the Congress for passing S. 193, the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act. I believe that Government has a responsibility to help strengthen families. This legislation will make television and radio more family friendly by allowing the FCC to impose stiffer fines on broadcasters who air obscene or indecent programming. I look forward to signing this important legislation into law.