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backyard. We can expand U.S. exports and export-related jobs. We can show millions across the hemisphere that democracy and free enterprise lead to a better life. Congress's path is clear: Members should have a healthy debate, hold a timely vote, and send the bill implementing the Colombia free trade agreement to my desk so I can sign it into law.

And now I would like members of my Cabinet who are here today to join me for the signing of the letter.

[*At this point, the President signed the letter.*]

Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:34 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Colombia's Ambassador to the U.S. Carolina Barco Isakson. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Small and Midsize Business Owners

April 7, 2008

I just had a fascinating discussion with fellow citizens who happen to be small-business owners, people who run small businesses. And I'm talking about a variety of small business. We got a meatpacker, an apple processor; we've got a grinder, a large equipment manufacturer, education man. I mean, we got a lot of folks from different backgrounds and different States, all of whom were talking about the effects of the progrowth economic package that was passed by the Congress and how that package is causing them to make capital investments that they might not have made in the year 2008.

And that's important, because in times of economic uncertainty, we want people making investment, so when a person buys an apple press, somebody is going to have to manufacture that press. When somebody manufactures that press, it means there's more likely to be work and income.

And so I'm very pleased to have heard from the small-business owners here that the package is going to cause them to make decisions that will help us recover out of this economic slowdown.

Now, having said that, they did share concerns with me. And I understand those concerns, and I feel the same way. One, there's concern about the high price of fuel. I mean, people have to make a living, and they're driving their cars and their trucks, and it's—fuel is hurting people. And so I fully understand that not only are people worried about their homes, they're worried about the cost of fuel—and one of the reasons why we got to keep taxes low.

As a matter of fact, one of the things that's going to happen with this progrowth package is that not only is it going to affect small businesses like it's affected folks here, but 130 million families are going to get some money, their own money. And of course, the purpose of that is to help boost consumption. We're in a rough time right now. I'm confident we're going to come out of it. And when we do, we're going to be a stronger and better country.

Congress, of course, is contemplating different measures. And my only advice to them is, one, make sure you give the progrowth package that was passed overwhelmingly a chance to work. Let's see what the effects are. Secondly, anything they do should not hurt the economy. And thirdly, I—you know, I think we ought to—in terms of progrowth packages—I think we ought to, again I repeat, give this one a chance to kick in. The experts tell me that this progrowth package is going to add some—you know, a percent, percent-and-a-half to the economy here in the latter part of this year. If that's the case, it's going to be an important part of recovering.

Anyway, long and short of it is, I thank you all for coming—very useful meeting. I thank you for being entrepreneurs. Thank you for working hard to provide for your families. Thank you for looking after your employees the way you do. Appreciate the fact that you're making investments in the year 2008 which will get this economy going.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:46 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Remarks Honoring the 2007 NCAA Football Champion Louisiana State University Tigers

April 7, 2008

Good to see you all. Welcome. Go Tigers! Sit down. Please sit down. Thanks for coming.

So I met some of these men in 2004; they feel pretty comfortable they were going to be back here. Some of them weren't so sure I was going to be back here. [*Laughter*] It's good to welcome you back. Proud you're here. Nothing like being called national champs. LSU has the honor of being the first school to win two BCS titles. This year there is no split.

I appreciate Les Miles and Kathy. Thanks for coming. Proud to have met you, coach. It was a great honor for me to have called you after you won that day. And I know you told the team that at least one guy called to congratulate. [*Laughter*] I welcome the LSU administrators, personnel, coaches, trainers, locker room folks, and most of all, the players.

I want to welcome Members of Congress—Jim McCrery. Jim, good to see you, sir. And Scott and Clark, good to see you boys. Rodney Alexander—Congressman, good to see you. Charles Boustany—I'm glad to see you, Charles. Thanks for coming. I appreciate you taking time to be here.

Out of the State government is State Treasurer John Kennedy. John, thank you for coming. Appreciate you coming up for that. Glad you brought Preston. Is Breaux here? No, he—[*laughter*]—he's working—[*laughter*]—which is a major upset—no. [*Laughter*]

Winning requires very strong leadership; that's what it takes. After 8 years of welcoming national champs, there's always one common denominator, and that is, it requires a strong leader to motivate people toward a common goal. And that's exactly what you have in Coach Les Miles. Coach Miles's 3 years has helped the team compile a 34 and 6 record. And this is a guy who's not afraid to take risks. He tried two fake field goals, fake punt, went for fourth down—went for first down on fourth down 15 times. Made it nearly every time. Of course, he had the players who helped him take that risk.

He also had to deal with some delicate situations away from the field, like inaccurate press stories. [*Laughter*] Coach, let me just say, I know the feeling. [*Laughter*]

This is Coach Miles's first time celebrating here at the White House. And a lot of folks are going to remember it, because it's the first time he's been seen in public without a hat on. [*Laughter*]

LSU fans had an amazing season. They—first of all, in the season, the number one ranking changed hands six times. Of course, LSU was number one on the day it counted; that's why they're here. The—you had to overcome adversity to get here. You played as a team, and you won some dramatic football games. And when you lost, it was pretty dramatic too. You beat Florida in a comeback with the largest crowd ever to watch a game at Tiger Stadium. Two weeks later, you rallied to beat Auburn on a touchdown scored with 1 second left on the clock.

After you lost to Arkansas, a lot of folks counted you out, but you held a team meeting and decided you had something to play for. In other words, you didn't let adversity affect you. You said, "We're going to do something about it." And then you beat Tennessee to win the SEC Championship, and you went from number seven to number two. And you went straight to the national title game, which didn't start off so good. And yet you had 31 unanswered points, like a true champion team, to win 38 to 24. And you're here at the White House representing LSU University as the national champs, and we congratulate you.

Being raised in Texas and growing up in Texas, I've got a lot of friends in Louisiana. And you inspired people across the State. I thought Matt—quarterback Matt Flynn put it best. He said, "You can't dream it any better than that." And that's what a lot of people were saying around your State.

You earned your place in the record books. You scored the most points in school history. And the seniors will go down as LSU's winningest class. No other senior class has had a better record than those who—[*applause*].

I welcome defensive tackle Glenn Dorsey, and so did the team when he turned down—when he decided not to turn pro last year.