

We should also conduct this difficult debate in a manner worthy of our country, without bitterness or anger. In all that lies ahead, let us match strong convictions with kindness and good will and decency.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:43 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Senate Action To Block Medical Liability Reform

February 24, 2004

I am disappointed that a minority in the Senate has again decided to play politics and block our Nation's ability to accomplish medical liability reform.

Today's vote is a blow to America's families, because pregnant women are losing access to their obstetricians and gynecologists due to frivolous and abusive lawsuits. Pregnant women who need prenatal and obstetric health care services deserve access to doctors in their own communities. Without the passage of reasonable reforms, the Nation's badly broken medical liability system will continue to drive physicians like obstetricians and gynecologists out of the practice of medicine and drive up the costs of health care for all Americans. For the benefit of America's families and for the sake of our health care system, there needs to be medical liability reform this year.

Statement on the Parliamentary Elections in Iran

February 24, 2004

I am very disappointed in the recently disputed parliamentary elections in Iran. The disqualification of some 2,400 candidates by the unelected Guardian Council deprived many Iranians of the opportunity to freely choose their representatives. I join many in Iran and around the world in condemning the Iranian regime's efforts to stifle freedom of speech—including the closing of two leading reformist newspapers—in the runup to the election. Such measures undermine the

rule of law and are clear attempts to deny the Iranian people's desire to freely choose their leaders.

The United States supports the Iranian people's aspirations to live in freedom, enjoy their God-given rights, and determine their own destiny.

Statement on Signing the NASA Flexibility Act of 2004

February 24, 2004

Today, I have signed into law S. 610, the "NASA Flexibility Act of 2004." The Act strengthens the ability of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to manage effectively the NASA personnel upon whom the future successes of America's civil space program depend.

Section 3 of the Act enacts new subsections 9802(g), (h), and (i) in title 5 of the United States Code, which purport to require or regulate the submission of certain plans, recommendations, and budget requests to the Congress. The executive branch shall construe these subsections in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch, to withhold information the disclosure of which could impair the deliberative processes of the Executive, and to recommend for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President judges necessary and expedient.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 24, 2004.

NOTE: S. 610, approved February 24, was assigned Public Law No. 108–201. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Executive Order 13329—Encouraging Innovation in Manufacturing

February 24, 2004

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the

Small Business Act, as amended (15 U.S.C. 631 *et seq.*), and to help ensure that Federal agencies properly and effectively assist the private sector in its manufacturing innovation efforts, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. Continued technological innovation is critical to a strong manufacturing sector in the United States economy. The Federal Government has an important role, including through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs, in helping to advance innovation, including innovation in manufacturing, through small businesses.

Sec. 2. Duties of Department and Agency Heads. The head of each executive branch department or agency with one or more SBIR programs or one or more STTR programs shall:

- (a) to the extent permitted by law and in a manner consistent with the mission of that department or agency, give high priority within such programs to manufacturing-related research and development to advance the policy set forth in section 1 of this order; and
- (b) submit reports annually to the Administrator of the Small Business Administration and the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy concerning the efforts of such department or agency to implement subsection 2(a) of this order.

Sec. 3. Duties of Administrator of the Small Business Administration. The Administrator of the Small Business Administration:

(a) shall establish, after consultation with the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, formats and schedules for submission of reports by the heads of departments and agencies under subsection 2(b) of this order; and

(b) is authorized to issue to departments and agencies guidelines and directives (in addition to the formats and schedules under subsection 3(a)) as the Administrator determines from time to time are necessary to implement subsection 2(a) of this order, after such guidelines and directives are submitted to the President, through the Director of the

Office of Science and Technology Policy, for approval and are approved by the President.

Sec. 4. Definitions. As used in this order:

- (a) “Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program” means a program to which section 9(e)(4) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(e)(4)) refers;
- (b) “Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program” means a program to which section 9(e)(6) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(e)(6)) refers;
- (c) “research and development” means an activity set forth in section 9(e)(5) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(e)(5)); and
- (d) “manufacturing-related” means relating to: (i) manufacturing processes, equipment and systems; or (ii) manufacturing workforce skills and protection.

Sec. 5. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the authority of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget with respect to budget, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) Nothing in this order shall be construed to require disclosure of information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law or by Executive Order, including Executive Order 12958 of April 17, 1995, as amended.

(c) This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the United States, its departments, agencies, or other entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 24, 2004.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 25, 2004]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on February 26.

Executive Order 13330—Human Service Transportation Coordination
February 24, 2004

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and to enhance access to transportation to improve mobility, employment opportunities, and access to community services for persons who are transportation-disadvantaged, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. This order is issued consistent with the following findings and principles:

(a) A strong America depends on citizens who are productive and who actively participate in the life of their communities.

(b) Transportation plays a critical role in providing access to employment, medical and health care, education, and other community services and amenities. The importance of this role is underscored by the variety of transportation programs that have been created in conjunction with health and human service programs, and by the significant Federal investment in accessible public transportation systems throughout the Nation.

(c) These transportation resources, however, are often difficult for citizens to understand and access, and are more costly than necessary due to inconsistent and unnecessary Federal and State program rules and restrictions.

(d) A broad range of Federal program funding allows for the purchase or provision of transportation services and resources for persons who are transportation-disadvantaged. Yet, in too many communities, these services and resources are fragmented, unused, or altogether unavailable.

(e) Federally assisted community transportation services should be seamless, comprehensive, and accessible to those who rely on them for their lives and livelihoods. For persons with mobility limitations related to advanced age, persons with disabilities, and persons struggling for self-sufficiency, transportation within and between our communities should be as available and affordable as possible.

(f) The development, implementation, and maintenance of responsive, comprehensive, coordinated community transportation sys-

tems is essential for persons with disabilities, persons with low incomes, and older adults who rely on such transportation to fully participate in their communities.

Sec. 2. Definitions. (a) As used in this order, the term “agency” means an executive department or agency of the Federal Government.

(b) For the purposes of this order, persons who are transportation-disadvantaged are persons who qualify for Federally conducted or Federally assisted transportation-related programs or services due to disability, income, or advanced age.

Sec. 3. Establishment of the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility. (a) There is hereby established, within the Department of Transportation for administrative purposes, the “Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility” (“Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council” or “Council”). The membership of the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council shall consist of:

(i) the Secretaries of Transportation, Health and Human Services, Education, Labor, Veterans Affairs, Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, and the Interior, the Attorney General, and the Commissioner of Social Security; and

(ii) such other Federal officials as the Chairperson of the Council may designate.

(b) The Secretary of Transportation, or the Secretary’s designee, shall serve as the Chairperson of the Council. The Chairperson shall convene and preside at meetings of the Council, determine its agenda, direct its work, and, as appropriate to particular subject matters, establish and direct subgroups of the Council, which shall consist exclusively of the Council’s members.

(c) A member of the Council may designate any person who is part of the member’s agency and who is an officer appointed by the President or a full-time employee serving in a position with pay equal to or greater than the minimum rate payable for GS-15 of the General Schedule to perform functions of the Council or its subgroups on the member’s behalf.