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out how to say it—is, 'Optimistic person comes here to work every day.' " And she captured my spirit, because I am optimistic about our future.

Thanks for giving me a chance to share that optimism with you. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. at the Grand Ole Opry House. In his remarks, he referred to entertainer Larry Gatlin of the Gatlin Brothers; country music entertainer Porter Wagoner; Mayor Bill Purcell of Nashville, TN; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Samuel A. Alito, Jr., as an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court

February 1, 2006

Good afternoon. Laura and I welcome you to the White House. Mr. Chief Justice, thank you for coming. Members of the Supreme Court, thank you all for being here. Members of the Senate, honored you're here. Ladies and gentlemen, appreciate you joining us on this historic occasion. This afternoon we're also honored by the presence of a strong and graceful woman, Mrs. Cissy Marshall. Thank you for coming, Mrs. Marshall.

Yesterday the United States Senate confirmed Sam Alito as the 110th Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Last night he looked pretty good in that black robe sitting there. [*Laughter*]

It's a proud day for Judge Alito and his entire family. We extend a special welcome to Martha, who has been at his side for more than 20 years. And with us, you can see his son, Phil, and daughter, Laura. If they're anything like our daughters, they're probably telling their dad how to behave and how to testify. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate Rosemary being with us today. And we're thinking of Sam's mom, Rose, who turned 91 in December. And of course, as we think of Rose, we think of her husband, Sam's late father. He came to our country as an immigrant from Italy in 1914. Sam Alito, Sr., instilled in his son a deep commitment to serving his fellow Americans. And I'm sure he's looking down with pride as Sam takes his place on the highest Court of the United States of America.

Sam Alito is replacing an extraordinary Justice, Sandra Day O'Connor. Justice O'Connor has been an admired member of the Supreme Court for 24 years. She has served our Nation with decency and spirit and great devotion, and I thank her on behalf of all the American people.

Sam, you've drawn quite a distinguished crowd here. I appreciate the Vice President being here, and Lynne. I want to thank the Attorney General and other members of my Cabinet who have joined us today. I want to thank the members of my team who have worked so hard to help Sam, particularly former Senator Dan Coats of Indiana.

I want to thank Secretary Mike Chertoff, who's with us. The reason I bring up Chertoff is they worked together, and Chertoff kind of put in a good word for Sam, you know—[*laughter*]—at a crucial moment. [*Laughter*]

I particularly want to thank the Members of the Senate who are here. I'm sorry I'm a little late. I've just come in from Tennessee. I got a little windy. And Senator Frist was with me. I appreciate you, Leader, for working hard to get this good man through. And thank you, Mitch McConnell, Senator McConnell, as well. I don't want to name all the Senators since we're running a little late, but I do want to mention the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Arlen Specter, who did a heck of good job.

Judge Alito becomes Justice Alito. As he becomes Justice Alito, our Nation completes a process that was ordained by our Founders in Philadelphia more than 200 years ago. Under the Constitution, the President nominates, and by and with the consent—advice and consent of the Senate, appoints the Justices of the Supreme Court. This process has been carried out many times since the beginning of our democracy. And each new appointment represents a renewal of the promise of our country and our constitutional order.

Our Founders thought carefully about the role they wanted judges to play in the American Republic. They decided on a court system that would be independent from political or public pressure, with judges who serve for life. America expects members of our judiciary to be prudent in exercising judicial power and firm in defending judicial independence. So every member of the Supreme Court takes an oath to uphold the Constitution and administer justice faithfully and impartially. This is a solemn responsibility.

And the man we honor today has demonstrated his devotion to our courts and law through years of service to our country. Sam Alito has distinguished himself as a member of our military, a Federal prosecutor, Assistant to the Solicitor General, U.S. Attorney in New Jersey, and for the last 15 years, a highly respected judge on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals.

Sam Alito is known for his steady demeanor, careful judgment, and complete integrity. Throughout his career he has treated others with respect. In return, he has earned the admiration of his colleagues on the bench, the lawyers who have come before it, and, of course, a very devoted group of proud law clerks.

During the confirmation process, the American people saw a man of character and legal brilliance. Like our fellow citizens, I was impressed by the dignity Sam Alito and his family displayed during the Senate hearings, and by the thoughtful scholarship and reverence of the Constitution that have always defined his approach to the law.

A Supreme Court Justice must meet the highest standard of legal excellence, while serving with humility and fidelity to our founding promise of equal justice under the law. These are qualities Americans want in a Supreme Court Justice. These are qualities Americans see in Sam Alito. He will make a superb Justice of the Supreme Court, and I know this son of New Jersey will make all Americans proud.

Sam, I thank you for agreeing to serve our country again and for accepting this new call to duty.

Now I ask the Chief Justice of the United States, John Roberts, to please step forward and administer the oath.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Cecilia Marshall, wife of former Justice Thurgood Marshall. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Associate Justice Alito.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Spending-Reduction Legislation

February 1, 2006

As I said last night, keeping America competitive requires us to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. The House today passed a significant spending-reduction package that will curb the growth of entitlement spending for the first time in years and help us stay on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009. I look forward to signing this bill into law. The budget I propose next week will continue to build on the spending restraint we have achieved.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 1932.

Statement on the New Freedom Initiative

February 1, 2006

Five years ago, I announced the New Freedom Initiative to build on the progress of the Americans with Disabilities Act and more fully integrate people with disabilities into all aspects of life. Since the announcement of this important initiative, we have expanded educational opportunities for children with disabilities and provided essential funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. We have launched disabilityinfo.gov to serve as an online resource for people with disabilities and their families, employers, service providers, and other community members. To provide expanded employment opportunities, we are assisting persons with disabilities by implementing the Ticket to Work program and strengthening training and employment services at One-Stop Career Centers.

As a result of these efforts, Americans with disabilities have greater access to the opportunities of America. My administration will