

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 clos-

ing 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.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia and an Exchange With Reporters  
February 25, 2004

*President Bush.* Here's what we're going to do. I will make a statement. The President will make a statement. I will then call upon an American correspondent to ask a question. The President will call upon a Georgian correspondent. We'll have two questions per side.

Mr. President, welcome. We followed the revolution that took place in your country very closely. We appreciate your firm commitment to democracy and freedom. We've had a very interesting discussion. I know firsthand that the President will do everything he can to earn the confidence of the people of Georgia by representing their will, by fighting corruption, by working for a system based upon integrity and decency and human rights.

I'm impressed by this leader. I'm impressed by his vision. I'm impressed by his courage. I am heartened by the fact that we have such a strong friend, a friend with whom we share values.

So Mr. President, welcome to the Oval Office. I appreciate the candid discussion we've had, and I'm proud to call you friend.

*President Saakashvili.* Thank you. It's a great honor, for me and for the people of Georgia, to be here in this Oval Office. It's not—our cooperation is very deep. We consider ourselves as very close ally and friend of the United States. We are proud to be friend of the United States. I am speaking on behalf of every Georgian.

I have to say that this cooperation, friendship—the U.S. helped us when we needed it most, and would like peoples—other peoples in Europe will never forget that. But our cooperation is—that held friendship is not only about security. It's not only about economy. Primarily it's about our shared values. And we are part of—proud part of antiterrorist coalition. We

have forces in Iraq. We are cooperating on other issues.

We are also working very hard on our improved relations with Russia. I had a very interesting conversation with President Putin in Moscow, and I believe Russia should become our reliable partner and we should improve our relations.

But at the same time, we believe that America's help is absolutely essential, and we are grateful. We will stay grateful, and we want to be not only close ally, but we want to be strong ally. Georgia will become stronger. Georgia will become more democratic. Democracy is top priority. Freedom of speech is top priority. Free enterprise, free market is top priority. And I think Georgia can become a role model for the whole region. And this is very important. We need U.S. help in that.

Regarding our revolution, it was the proudest moment of my own life and of life of the whole generation. And we are so proud that we were supported in our fight for democracy and for people's right to choose by the United States, and Washington was the first to come and help us. And I'm sure we'll never forget that.

Mr. President, I really enjoyed being here at the White House. Thank you very much.

*President Bush.* Thank you. Hold on a second, please. Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press], we're going to—

Q. What do you think about—

*President Bush.* Hold on, please. Will somebody translate—

*President Saakashvili.* It's in English.

*President Bush.* I understand. I understand. Hold on for a second. The way this is going to work is this.

Q. I'm from Georgia.

*President Bush.* I know you are, excuse me. We're going to start with the American