

Statement on the National Economy May 25, 2006

America's economy is on the fast track. Today's revised report by the Commerce Department indicates our economy grew at 5.3 percent for the first quarter of this year. That is the fastest growth in 2½ years and another clear sign that our economy is powerful, productive, and prosperous. I commend America's workers, small-business

owners, and innovators for contributing to this strong economic growth. I will continue to work to pursue progrowth policies, make the tax cuts permanent, and restrain Government spending so that opportunity reaches every American neighborhood and every American family.

Statement on the Department of Justice's Handling of Representative William J. Jefferson's Materials May 25, 2006

Over the last several days, the House of Representatives and the Department of Justice have attempted to resolve a dispute over the execution of a search warrant on the Capitol Hill office of Congressman William Jefferson, who is under criminal investigation.

The Department of Justice's search was part of an important investigation of alleged public corruption. At the same time, the bipartisan leadership of the House of Representatives believes this search violated the constitutional principle of separation of powers and the Speech or Debate Clause of the Constitution. They note these principles must be adhered to, even in the pursuit of a legitimate criminal investigation.

I recognize these are deeply held views. Our Government has not faced such a dilemma in more than two centuries. Yet after days of discussions, it is clear these differences will require more time to be worked out.

So today I am directing the Department of Justice to seal all the materials recovered

from Congressman Jefferson's office for the next 45 days and not to allow access to anyone involved in the investigation. I am also ordering the sealed materials to remain under the custody of the Solicitor General, who heads a separate office within the Justice Department and is not involved in the investigation.

This period will provide both parties more time to resolve the issues in a way that ensures that materials relevant to the ongoing criminal investigation are made available to prosecutors in a manner that respects the interests of a coequal branch of Government. The Justice Department and the House of Representatives should continue their discussions and resolve this matter as quickly as possible.

Let me be clear: Investigating and prosecuting crime is a crucial executive responsibility that I take seriously. Those who violate the law—including a Member of Congress—should and will be held to account. This investigation will go forward, and justice will be served.