

The President's Radio Address *April 1, 2006*

Good morning. As tax day approaches later this month, many American families are now finishing their tax returns. And as you do, an important debate is taking place in Washington that will affect the amount you will pay in the years ahead.

I believe our economy grows when you're allowed to keep more of your hard-earned money and make your own decisions about how to save, spend, and invest. So, working with Congress, we've provided tax relief for all Americans who pay income taxes. We lowered tax rates to let workers keep more of their paychecks. We doubled the child tax credit and reduced the marriage penalty, and we put the death tax on the road to extinction. We also cut taxes on dividends and capital gains and expanded incentives for small businesses to invest so they could grow and create new jobs.

Since 2001, the tax relief we delivered has left \$880 billion in the hands of American workers and small businesses and families like yours, and you've used that money to help produce more than 4 years of uninterrupted economic growth. Last year, our economy grew at a healthy 3.5 percent, faster than any other major industrialized nation.

One politician in Washington said in 2003 that our tax cuts were "ruining our economy and costing us jobs." The truth is that since August 2003, America has added almost 5 million new jobs. Our unemployment rate is now 4.8 percent—lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Real after-tax income is up 8 percent per person since the beginning of 2001. More Americans now own their own homes than at any time in our history, and minority homeownership is at record levels. Consumer confidence is at its highest level in nearly 4 years. Productivity has grown

strongly over the past 5 years, and our small-business sector is thriving.

The evidence is overwhelming; the opponents of tax cuts were wrong. Tax relief has helped to create jobs and opportunities for American families, and it's helped our economy grow. By maintaining our progrowth economic policies and practicing spending restraint in Washington, we can keep our economy growing and stay on track to meet our goal of cutting the budget deficit in half by 2009.

The problem is that the tax relief we passed is set to expire over the next few years. Some Democrats in Washington are insisting that we let that happen—or even repeal the tax cuts now. In either case, that would weaken our economy and would leave American families with a big tax hike that they do not expect and will not welcome. Because America needs more than a temporary economic expansion, we need more than temporary tax relief. To keep our economy growing, to keep our businesses investing, and to keep creating jobs, we need to ensure that you keep more of what you earn. So Congress needs to make the tax relief permanent.

Making tax relief permanent includes extending the tax cuts on dividends and capital gains. These tax cuts have been vital to our economic growth. By lowering the cost of capital, this tax relief has given businesses an incentive to invest and expand, and that has helped create jobs and opportunity. I urge the Congress to extend these progrowth tax cuts, so our businesses can plan with confidence and keep creating jobs for American workers.

The debate in Congress over taxes ultimately comes down to this: Who knows best how to use your money, politicians in Washington or you? I believe the money we spend in Washington is your money, not the Government's money. I trust you

to make the best decisions about what to do with your hard-earned dollars, because when you do, your family is better off, our economy grows, and prosperity and opportunity spread throughout our great land.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:15 a.m. on March 31 at the LeBlanc Spa and Resort

Remarks Following a Meeting on Health Care Initiatives and an Exchange With Reporters *April 4, 2006*

The President. America needs a health care system that empowers patients to make rational and smart decisions for themselves and their families, a health care system in which the relationship between the patient and the provider are central, not a health care system where decisions are made by the Federal Government.

So we've been having a discussion here today about how to make sure our health care system meets certain objectives: one, empowering the patients; two, how do we have a system that helps control rising costs in health care?

And one of the interesting and innovative ways to do that is through health savings accounts. Health savings accounts are good for the uninsured; they're good for small businesses; they're good for larger corporations. And people around the table here have been sharing their experiences with how folks are saving money through health savings accounts. And I would urge the small-business owner or the individual who is concerned about his or her health care to take a look at a health savings account.

We talked about the importance of cost savings through these important products, but we also talked about how we can work with the United States Congress to strengthen them, to make them more appealing, to give people more choices in the

in Cancun, Mexico, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 31 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

marketplace, to say to the American people, "We trust your judgment. We trust you to make the right decision for you and your families."

And so I want to thank you all for coming for this most interesting discussion. And I'll be glad to take a couple of questions.

Nedra [Nedra Pickler, Associated Press].

Representative Thomas D. DeLay

Q. Yes, sir. Thank you. I'm wondering if we can get your reaction to Tom DeLay's resignation? Do you think it hurts the Republican Party or your ability to get work done in Congress?

The President. I had a talk last night on my way back from the ball game with Congressman DeLay. He informed me of his decision. My reaction was, it had to have been a very difficult decision for someone who loved representing his district in the State of Texas. I wished him all the very best, and I know he's looking forward to—he's looking to the future.

My own judgment is, is that our party will continue to succeed because we're the party of ideas. And one of the most important ideas is to make sure that health care is available and affordable for the citizens of this country. One way to do so is to