

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representa-

tives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 2. The notice of April 1 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Following a Meeting on Health Savings Accounts *April 2, 2007*

The cornerstone of good health care policy is to make sure that patients and docs are in charge of medical decisions. And therefore, one of the objectives of this administration has been to encourage the expansion of products like health savings accounts. And today I have met with some small-business owners, some employees of companies that have provided health savings accounts for them.

And I'm pleased to report that people have come to realize the benefits of health savings accounts, such as, one, health savings accounts are affordable for individuals and small businesses. In other words, if you're a small-business owner and you're worried about providing good health care for your employees, you ought to look into a health savings account as a way to provide that benefit to your employees.

Secondly, health savings accounts enable a person to save, tax free, for medical expenses. By making rational decisions about your life, you'll end up with more money in your health savings account, on a tax-free basis.

And thirdly, that savings account is something you can carry with you from job to job. A lot of people in America change jobs on a regular basis, and they are deeply concerned about whether or not they'll have a health care plan when they change jobs. And the health savings account enables you to carry your money that you've saved, on a tax-free basis, from one job to the next.

You know, 2 years ago there was—about a million of our citizens had health savings accounts. And today, over 5 million of people have health savings accounts—or nearly 5 million people have health savings accounts. It's up—actually, you can see from the chart the growth—4.5 million people. And that's a 43-percent increase, from last year to this year, in the number of people that are beginning to realize the benefits of health savings accounts.

And interestingly enough, of those who purchased—of individuals who purchased health savings accounts, about 25 percent of them were uninsured. In other words, health savings accounts enable someone who is uninsured to realize the benefits of private insurance, and in an affordable way.

I strongly believe that the United States Congress needs to strengthen health savings accounts, just like they need to make sure that the Tax Code treats every person in America fairly. And that's why I've suggested we change the Tax Code to enable the small-business owner, the self-employed, or the individual worker to be able to have more affordable insurance. There's a lot we can do together to empower the individual in this country to be in charge of his or her health care decisions.

So I want to thank my fellow Americans for joining us. I really appreciated the discussion we had. We've got people from Minnesota and Texas and Georgia and

Michigan. These are people who are beginning to realize the benefits of health savings, and I thank you for sharing your information with me. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 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.

Remarks on Presenting the Commander in Chief's Trophy to the United States Naval Academy Midshipmen

April 2, 2007

The President. Please be seated. Welcome to the Rose Garden. It seems to me that this is becoming a spring tradition. [Laughter] For the fourth year in a row, the football team from the Naval Academy is here to receive the Commander in Chief's Trophy—the Rose Garden should be called the Yard.

This year's team was among the Navy's best ever. That says a lot. This is a team that had the most rushing yards in the Nation. That says a lot. You had the highest graduation rate of any football team in the country. That says even more. You went 9 and 3. You made it to the bowl game. And you beat Army.

I thank you all for coming. I appreciate members of the administration who have joined us: Deputy Secretary of the VA Gordon Mansfield; Secretary Don Winter of the Navy; General Pete Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—and, I might add, the first marine to serve in that capacity; Admiral G, Ed Giambastiani—that's hard for a Texan to say, but it's not hard to tell you how much I admire Admiral G and Pete Pace; Admiral Mike Mullen, Chief of Naval Operations, thank you for coming, Chief; General Jim Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps; and Ellen Moyer, the mayor of Annapolis. We are glad you all are here, and, Mayor, thanks for coming.

Vice Admiral Rod Rempt—Rod, I notice that you gathered up my speech. [Laughter] Just remember, page three follows

page two. [Laughter] But it's good to have you again.

Vice Adm. Rodney P. Rempt. Sir, it's a pleasure to be here.

The President. Coach Paul Johnson—you talk about a winner, this guy knows how to build winners. And, Coach, we're glad you're back. I'm proud to welcome you and your staff. I appreciate very much the members of the football team that have joined us, and I thank all of the Naval Academy supporters who are here.

The Navy's fourth consecutive winning season may not sound like much to people who don't follow football, but it's a remarkable feat considering that the team was 0 and 10, 6 years ago. They showed up 10 times, they played hard all 10 times, but they won 0 times. And here they are, standing in the Rose Garden with the Commander in Chief. It says a lot about resilience and a lot about determination and a lot about correcting past mistakes.

Coach Johnson has put together a really good coaching staff, and I appreciate very much, Coach, you motivating these players toward championship—toward the championships that you've earned. The season started with three wins in a row, including a blowout over Stanford. You beat Air Force in Colorado Springs. You beat Army by 12 points, the fifth win in a row for the Naval Academy. They tell me that's a pretty big deal.