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exempt facility bonds. Under the leadership of the Vice President, we want to increase the number of empowerment zones to give more businesses incentives to move into these areas.

Future Challenges

America's small business community is both the symbol and the embodiment of our economic freedom. That is why my Administration has made concerted efforts to expand small business access to capital, reform the system of Government regulations to make it more equitable for small companies, and expand small business access to new and growing markets.

This is an important report because it annually reflects our current knowledge about the dynamic small business economy. Clearly, much is yet to be learned: existing statistics are not yet current enough to answer all the questions about how small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses are faring in obtaining capital, providing benefits, and responding to regional growth or downsizing. I continue to encourage cooperative Government efforts to gather and analyze data that is useful for Federal policy-making.

I am proud that my Administration is on the leading edge in working as a partner with the small business community. Our economic future deserves no less. The job of my Administration, and its pledge to small business owners, is to listen, to find out what works and to ensure a healthy environment for small business growth.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 6, 1999.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Telecommunications Payments to Cuba

May 6, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 1705(e)(6) of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, 22 U.S.C. 6004(e)(6), as amended by section 102(g) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, Public Law 104–114, 110 Stat. 785, I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on telecommunications payments made to Cuba pursuant to Department of the Treasury specific licenses.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 6, 1999.

Remarks on Departure for Houston, Texas, and an Exchange With Reporters

May 7, 1999

The President. Good morning. Tomorrow I will be visiting some of the communities that were so terribly damaged by the tornadoes this week. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas, with the people of Tennessee who also endured terrible storms and destruction.

Before I leave, I'd like to make comments on a couple of other matters. First, on the new economic report issued today: We received more good news for our working families. Unemployment is 4.3 percent, with 234,000 new jobs added last month alone. African-American unemployment is at its lowest level on record. And real wages, after declining 4.3 percent in the 12 years before I took office, have now risen over 6 percent in the last 6 years. The American economy continues to see a remarkable combination of strong growth, job creation, and low inflation. Our economic strategy continues to be the right strategy for prosperity, and it is the one we should follow as we work to strengthen Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century.

It's worth remembering that the move from economic stagnation to sustained prosperity is not the only turnaround our Nation has seen in the last 6 years. We also see the crime rate falling, the welfare rolls falling, the teen pregnancy rate falling, drunk driving going down, a host of other social ills now easing, even though for so long they seemed destined only to worsen.

The American people, in homes and communities all across this country, are working hard at the grassroots level to turn around