

Week Ending Friday, May 20, 2005

The President's Radio Address

May 14, 2005

Good morning. I'm pleased to report that we see new signs that the progrowth policies we have pursued during the past 4 years are having a positive effect on our economy. We added 274,000 new jobs in April, and we have added nearly 3½ million jobs over the past 2 years. Unemployment is down to 5.2 percent, below the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. We have seen steady job gains during each of the past 23 months, and today, more Americans are working than at any time in our history.

There are other good reasons for optimism. The economy grew at a solid rate of 3.6 percent over the past four quarters, and economists expect strong growth for the rest of 2005. Manufacturing activity is enjoying its longest period of growth in 16 years. Inflation and mortgage rates remain low, and we have more homeowners in America than ever before.

These positive signs are a tribute to the effort and enterprise of America's workers and entrepreneurs, but we have more to do. So next week, I will focus on three priorities that will strengthen the long-term economic security of our Nation.

On Monday, I will travel to West Point, Virginia, to highlight the benefits of biodiesel, an alternative fuel that will help our country achieve greater energy independence. We'll also discuss our need for a comprehensive national energy strategy that reduces our dependence on foreign oil. This strategy will encourage more efficient technologies, make the most of our existing resources, help global energy consumers like China and India reduce their own use of hydrocarbons, encourage conservation, and develop promising new sources of energy such as hydrogen, ethanol, and biodiesel.

I applaud the House for passing an energy bill that is largely consistent with these goals.

Now the Senate must act. Congress needs to get a good energy bill to my desk by the August recess so I can sign it into law.

On Tuesday, I will welcome our newest United States Trade Representative, former Congressman Rob Portman. Ambassador Portman understands that expanding trade is vital for American workers and consumers. He will make sure we vigorously enforce the trade laws on the books while also working to continue opening foreign markets to American crops and products. The Central America Free Trade Agreement would help us achieve these goals. This agreement would help the new democracies in our hemisphere deliver better jobs and higher labor standards to their workers, and it would create a more level playing field for American goods and services. Congress needs to pass this important legislation.

Finally, on Thursday, I will travel to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to discuss with young people the importance of acting now to strengthen Social Security. The Social Security safety net has a hole in it for younger workers. For the sake of our children and grandchildren, we need to make Social Security permanently solvent. And we need to make the system a better deal for younger workers by allowing them to put some of their payroll taxes, if they so choose, into a voluntary personal retirement account. Because this money will be saved and invested, workers will have the opportunity to earn a higher rate of return on their money than anything the current Social Security system can now give them.

The American economy is the envy of the world. For the sake of our Nation's hard-working families, we must work together to achieve long-term economic security so that we can continue to spread prosperity and hope throughout America and the world.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on May 13 in the Cabinet Room at the White House

for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 13 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service

May 15, 2005

Thank you all. Thank you for the warm welcome. It is an honor and a privilege to join you to pay our respects to our Nation's fallen law enforcement officers. Every year at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, we add names of those who have been lost in the line of duty. All of these men and women served the cause of justice. Our Nation stands in admiration and gratitude for their service, and we ask God's blessings for their families and friends they have left behind.

I want to thank Chuck Canterbury for his leadership of the National Fraternal Order of Police. He is a good friend, and I value his friendship. I want to thank Aliza Clark for her leadership as well, and Jim Pasco, who is the executive director of the National FOP. I want to thank Chaplain Ford for his beautiful blessings.

I want to thank members of my Cabinet who are here: Attorney General Al Gonzales; Secretary Elaine Chao; Secretary Mike Chertoff. I thank the FBI Director, Bob Mueller, and the Director of ATF, Carl Truscott, for joining us.

I appreciate the Members of Congress who are here. I want to thank Majority Leader Bill Frist, Senator Pat Leahy. Congressman Dave Reichert from Washington is here with us. He served as a law enforcement officer for over 30 years and received the 2004 National Sheriff's Association Sheriff of the Year Award. Congressman, I appreciate you coming, along with other Members of the Congress.

I especially want to thank Darryl Worley for his beautiful performance of "I Miss My Friend."

There are more than 800,000 men and women who serve as law enforcement in this country. When these brave Americans take

the oath to serve and protect their fellow citizens, they answer a vital calling and accept a profound responsibility. Since America's early days, the badge has represented a pledge to protect the innocent, and Americans honor all who wear that badge.

The tradition of sacrifice and service runs strong amongst law enforcement. The fallen officers we honor this afternoon honored that tradition of service and sacrifice, and the flag of the United States of America flies at half-staff today in memory of their courage.

I thank all the family members who are with us today. Our Nation is grateful to you. We pray that you find strength to bear the loss. And you can know that our Nation will always remember and honor the ones you loved.

I also thank all the law enforcement officers who have come here today to pay tribute to fallen comrades. The bonds between officers are strong, and you look out for each other on sunny mornings and in the shadows of danger. Your loyalty to one another and your service to America do great honor to our system of justice. Thank you for your service.

We're a nation built on the rule of law, and the men and women who enforce those laws uphold America's role as a beacon for fairness and peace. And today we honor 415 new names added to the memorial wall.

Among them are Detroit police officers Matthew Bowens and Jennifer Fettig. The officers were making a routine traffic stop when the suspect opened fire. Though Officer Bowens had already been shot several times, himself, his first concern was for his injured partner. Both officers gave their lives in protecting each other and their fellow citizens, and this Nation of ours will always honor them.

Danger to law enforcement can come from the outskirts of a community, as it did to Bradford County, Pennsylvania, Deputy Chris Burgert. He and his partner, Deputy Mike VanKuren, were shot last March while trying to serve a bench warrant on a known criminal. Chris had been leading a drug investigation that often brought him face to face with danger on rural backroads. And his bravery had brought a string of successes