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Statement on House of Representatives Action on the Legislative Agenda

December 19, 2005

I appreciate the House of Representatives for its work to meet key national priorities, including funding the war on terror, voting to renew provisions of the PATRIOT Act, assisting hurricane victims, reducing our dependence on foreign sources of oil, and preparing against the threat of an avian flu pandemic. I also applaud the House for being wise with taxpayer dollars and approving a significant reduction in spending on entitlements. I thank the Speaker and the House leaders, Chairman Nussle, and the chairmen of the authorizing committees for their leadership. I urge the Senate to send these bills to my desk promptly so that I can sign them into law.

Statement on the Inauguration of the Afghan National Assembly

December 19, 2005

I congratulate the Afghan people on the inauguration of the new Afghan national assembly. Today is another milestone in Afghanistan's historic transition to a stable and democratic state governed by the rule of law. A freely and fairly elected legislature plays a vital role in the life of a representative democracy. I applaud the members of the national assembly on their service to their country and support their efforts, with President Karzai and his Government, to improve the lives of the Afghan people.

Message on the Observance of Christmas 2005

December 19, 2005

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel"—which means, God with us.

Matthew 1:23

More than 2,000 years ago, a virgin gave birth to a Son, and the God of heaven came to Earth. Mankind had received its Savior, and to those who had dwelled in darkness, the light of hope had come. Each Christmas, we celebrate that first coming anew, and we rejoice in the knowledge that the God who came to Earth that night in Bethlehem is with us still and will remain with us forever.

Christmas is a season of hope and joy, a time to give thanks for the blessing of Christ's birth and for the blessings that surround us every day of the year. We have much to be thankful for in this country, and we have a responsibility to help those in need. Jesus calls us to help others, and acts of kindness toward the less fortunate fulfill the spirit of the Christmas season.

On Christmas, we pray for freedom, justice, and peace on Earth. We remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country and for our freedom, and we ask for God's blessing on their loved ones. We ask God to watch over all of our men and women in uniform. Many are serving in distant lands, helping to advance the cause of freedom and peace. Our entire Nation is grateful to them and prays for their safe return.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a blessed and merry Christmas.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Message on the Observance of Hanukkah 2005

December 19, 2005

I send greetings to all those celebrating Hanukkah, the festival of lights.

More than 2,000 years ago, the Jewish people led a revolt against oppressors who forbade them to pray, study the Torah, or observe their religious customs. Led by Judah Maccabee and fueled by their faith, their small army triumphed over tyranny. When they reclaimed the desecrated Temple and prepared it to be purified and rededicated, the holy oil that should have lasted only one day instead burned for eight days. During Hanukkah, Jews around the world honor this miracle by lighting the menorah, a symbol of hope shining through darkness.