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And so today Matt Enriquez is with us. So Matt comes in to meet the President. I said, "How you doing, Matt?" He didn't speak—he looked a little nervous. [*Laughter*] Matt was addicted to drugs. He had spent time because of robbery. He was lost, and then he was found by people at Teen Challenge. He is now going to college.

Where are you, Matt? There he is. Where's Arthur? Pastor, stand up. [*Applause*] Yes, there you go. Get your Pastor, Matt. There he is. Thank you.

So Matt now goes to the Connecticut Culinary Institute. If you're looking for a cook, he's your man. [*Laughter*] Here's what he said: "The best thing about"—speaking about Teen Challenge—"is the love that's in the program. I had no idea what I wanted to do at all. This let me know what I wanted to do for the rest of my life."

See, Government can pass law, and it can hand out money, but it cannot love. And so I want to thank—[*applause*]. I appreciate the examples—letting me use you as examples. America can change one heart at a time. Matt is living proof. America changes not only when a soul like Matt gets saved but the person who is involved with helping Matt also becomes a stronger and better citizen as well.

And now Matt goes on. See, Matt himself serves as a way to help change lives. Maybe Matt—maybe somebody is listening here. I don't know if this deal is on C–SPAN or not, but if it is, maybe somebody is out there like Matt, who needs help and can find help at a Teen Challenge or another program, all aimed at helping somebody save lives.

Matt, I know when you get your deal going and making a good living as a cook, you yourself will turn and help find somebody else find help too. So I appreciate you.

Our job is—for the next 3 years, is to continue to work with Congress to make sure that money is opened up to faith-based programs. Competitive grant money should not be earmarked. It should be open for competitive-based grants so that—[*applause*].

We'll continue to work with local and State officials to open up their programs to faith and community-based programs. I'm going to continue to work on individual choice programs. I like the idea of providing help for individuals by empowering them to be the decisionmaker. In other words, it makes a lot of sense to me to say to somebody who is trying to recover from a drug addiction, "Here's the money to help you; you go pick the program that suits your needs so you can solve your problem."

And so we got a lot of work to do, to continue to encourage you to do the work you're doing. I am inspired by the love and compassion that I find as I travel the country. For those of you, by the way, who are involved with helping the Katrina folks, I want to thank you from the bottom of our Nation's heart for welcoming those who I'm sure felt lost, and then felt welcomed when a total stranger embraced them in a typically American compassionate way. I assure you that as long as I'm the President, I will always recognize where the strength of this country lies, the true strength—and that's in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens.

My hope is that the vision that de Tocqueville saw in 1830 is a vision that some observer will find still strong in America in the year 2030 and 2060 and beyond. Because so long as America is able to unleash the compassion of our country, will it be able to bring hope into dark corners of our country, places where there is no light, places where there's despair, places where people can realize their potential if given a chance.

And so I want to—for those of you who are a part of giving people a chance, for those of you who have heard the universal call, I thank you for your work and ask for God's blessings on your lives and on your work.

Thanks for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

Remarks on Signing the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005

March 9, 2006

Welcome. Thanks for the applause. Glad you're here in the people's house.

I'm going to sign—in a few moments I'll be signing the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act. This is a really important piece of legislation. It is a piece of

legislation that's vital to win the war on terror and to protect the American people.

The law allows our intelligence and law enforcement officials to continue to share information. It allows them to continue to use tools against terrorists that they used against—that they use against drug dealers and other criminals. It will improve our Nation's security, while we safeguard the civil liberties of our people. The legislation strengthens the Justice Department so it can better detect and disrupt terrorist threats. And the bill gives law enforcement new tools to combat threats to our citizens from international terrorists to local drug dealers.

It is an important piece of legislation, and I thank those here who helped get it passed. I particularly want to thank the Attorney General, Al Gonzales. It's good to see former Attorney Generals here as well. I appreciate Secretary Mike Chertoff, Secretary John Snow, Ambassador Negroponte, Bob Mueller. Thank you all for coming. John Walters, appreciate you being here.

I particularly want to thank the Members of the Congress who are up here, starting with the Speaker of the House, Denny Hastert. Mr. Speaker, thanks for your leadership on this important piece of legislation. I do want to pay special tribute to Senator Arlen Specter and Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner. These are the chairmen of the Judiciary Committees that got this legislation to this desk. Thank you all for your hard work. I appreciate you being here.

I want to thank Pat Roberts, who's with us; John Boehner, who's majority leader; Roy Blunt, the majority whip. I want to thank all the other Members of the Congress who have joined us, particularly Peter King, who is the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. Chief Ramsey, it's good to see you. Appreciate you coming. Always be good to the local police chief. [*Laughter*]

America remains a nation at war. The war reached our shores on September the 11th, 2001. On that morning, we saw clearly the violence and hatred of a new enemy. We saw the terrorists' destructive vision for us when they killed nearly 3,000 men, women, and children.

In the face of this ruthless threat, our Nation has made a clear choice: We will confront this mortal danger; we will stay on the offensive; and we're not going to wait to be attacked again. Since September the 11th, 2001, we have taken the fight to the enemy. We've hunted terrorists in the mountains of Afghanistan, cities of Iraq, in the islands of Southeast Asia, and everywhere else they plot, plan, and train. Our men and women in uniform have brought down two regimes that supported terrorism. We liberated 50 million people. We've gained new allies in the war on terror.

As we wage the war on terror overseas, we're also going after the terrorists here at home, and one of the most important tools we have used to protect the American people is the PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act closed dangerous gaps in America's law enforcement and intelligence capabilities, gaps the terrorists exploited when they attacked us on September the 11th.

The PATRIOT Act was passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. It strengthened our national security in two important ways. First, it authorized law enforcement and intelligence officers to share vital information. Before the PATRIOT Act, criminal investigators were often separated from intelligence officers by a legal and bureaucratic wall. The PATRIOT Act tore down the wall. And as a result, law enforcement and intelligence officers are sharing information, working together, and bringing terrorists to justice.

Secondly, the PATRIOT Act has allowed agents to pursue terrorists with the same tools they use against other criminals. Before the PATRIOT Act, it was easier to track the phone contacts of a drugdealer than the phone contacts of an enemy operative. Before the PATRIOT Act, it was easier to get the credit card receipts of a tax cheater than trace the financial support of an Al Qaida fundraiser. The PATRIOT Act corrected these double standards, and the United States is safer as a result.

Over the past 4 years, America's law enforcement and intelligence personnel have proved that the PATRIOT Act works. Federal, State, and local law enforcement have used the PATRIOT Act to break up terror

cells in Ohio, New York, Oregon, and Virginia. We've prosecuted terrorist operatives and supporters in California and Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, Washington, and North Carolina.

The PATRIOT Act has accomplished exactly what it was designed to do. It has helped us detect terror cells, disrupt terrorist plots, and save American lives. The bill I sign today extends these vital provisions. It also gives our Nation new protections and added defenses.

This legislation creates a new position of Assistant Attorney General for National Security. This will allow the Justice Department to bring together its national security, counterterrorism, counterintelligence, and foreign intelligence surveillance operations under a single authority. This reorganization fulfills one of the critical recommendations of the WMD Commission. It will help our brave men and women in law enforcement connect the dots before the terrorists strike.

This bill also will help protect Americans from the growing threat of methamphetamine. Meth is easy to make. It is highly addictive. It is ruining too many lives across our country. The bill introduces commonsense safeguards that would make many of the ingredients used in manufacturing meth harder to obtain in bulk and easier for law enforcement to track.

For example, the bill places limits on large-scale purchases of over-the-counter drugs that are used to manufacture meth. It requires stores to keep these ingredients behind the counter or in locked display cases. The bill also increases penalties for smuggling and selling of meth. Our Nation is committed to protecting our citizens and our young people from the scourge of methamphetamine.

The PATRIOT Act has served America well, yet we cannot let the fact that America has not been attacked since September the 11th lull us into the illusion that the terrorist threat has disappeared. We still face dangerous enemies. The terrorists haven't lost the will or the ability to kill innocent folks. Our military, law enforcement, homeland security, and intelligence professionals are working day and night to protect us from this threat. We're safer for their efforts, and we'll continue to give them the tools to get the job done.

And now, it's my honor to sign the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:46 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Charles H. Ramsey, chief, Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, DC. H.R. 3199, approved March 9, was assigned Public Law No. 109–177. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Signing the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005

March 9, 2006

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 3199, the "USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005," and then S. 2271, the "USA PATRIOT Act Additional Reauthorizing Amendments Act of 2006." The bills will help us continue to fight terrorism effectively and to combat the use of the illegal drug methamphetamine that is ruining too many lives.

The executive branch shall construe the provisions of H.R. 3199 that call for furnishing information to entities outside the executive branch, such as sections 106A and 119, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch and to withhold information the disclosure of which could impair foreign relations, national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties.

The executive branch shall construe section 756(e)(2) of H.R. 3199, which calls for an executive branch official to submit to the Congress recommendations for legislative action, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise