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George W. Bush

The White House,
June 23, 2006.

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NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on June 28. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

June 24, 2006

Good morning. This past week, I traveled to Austria and Hungary, where I had productive meetings with our European allies. We discussed the challenges and opportunities we share, including the importance of spreading prosperity at home and around the world. It's good to be back home, and I'm pleased to report that our economy is strong, growing, and delivering prosperity to more of our people.

Let me give you a few facts. In the first quarter of 2006, our economy grew at an impressive annual rate of 5.3 percent. Since August of 2003, America has created more than 5.3 million new jobs, more than all 25 nations of the European Union combined. Productivity is growing, and wages are beginning to rise. And because taxes are low, workers are keeping more of the money they earn.

Our economy is heading into the summer on the fast track, and one of the best ways to keep our momentum going is to restrain spending in Washington, DC. Earlier this month, Congress took an important step by passing an emergency spending bill that stayed within the strict spending limits I set. The bill included necessary funding for high priorities, such as equipping our military and rebuilding the gulf coast, and it showed discipline in other areas. Congress deserves credit for meeting my spending limits, and I was pleased to sign the emergency spending bill into law.

As Members of Congress show restraint on spending bills, they also need to make reforms in the spending process. Under the current system, many lawmakers are able to insert funding for pet projects into large spending bills. This process is called earmarking, and it often results in unnecessary spending. For example, a bill to fund our military can be loaded up with unjustified earmarks and other spending that may not add to our national security.

This leaves Members of Congress with two bad options—they can either vote against the whole bill, including all the worthwhile spending, or they have to accept the whole bill, including the wasteful spending. The President is left with the same dilemma—either he has to veto the entire bill or sign the bill and approve the unnecessary spending.

There's a smarter way to handle taxpayer dollars, and it begins with granting the President a tool called the line-item veto. A line-item veto would allow the President to remove wasteful spending from a bill while preserving the rest of the legislation. Forty-three of our Nation's 50 Governors have line-item veto authority, and they have used that authority to remove needless spending from otherwise good bills.

Ten years ago, Members of Congress from both parties voted to grant President Clinton the line-item veto. However, the Supreme Court ruled that version of the line-item veto unconstitutional because it took too much spending authority away from the Congress. I proposed a new version of the line-item veto that fixes the problem and gives the President a clear and constitutional way to cut wasteful spending. Under my proposal, the President would identify a list of unnecessary items that should be removed from a larger spending bill. Congress would then be required to hold a prompt up-or-down vote on the list.

A line-item veto would give the President a way to insist on greater discipline in the budget. A line-item veto would reduce the incentive for Congress to spend wastefully because when lawmakers know their pet projects will be held up to public scrutiny, they will be less likely to suggest them in the first place. Most importantly, a line-item veto would benefit American taxpayers by ensuring greater respect for their hard-earned dollars.

This past Thursday, the House of Representatives passed a bill granting line-item-veto authority. This was a victory for the taxpayers and for spending restraint. I call on the Senate to show a bipartisan commitment to fiscal discipline by passing the line-item veto so we can work together to cut wasteful spending, reduce the deficit, and save money for American taxpayers.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on June 23 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Organizations That Support the United States Military in Iraq and Afghanistan and an Exchange With Reporters

June 26, 2006

The President. I have just had a remarkable discussion with some of my fellow citizens who have dedicated their lives to making sure our troops know that this country supports them as they help secure our country and spread freedom.

One of the amazing things about America is that people are desirous of coming together to support a neighbor in need. And we've got kids who are overseas defending this country, and we've got people at this table who are supporting their families, their loved ones, and most importantly, the troops who are in harm's way.

There's an organization called America Supports You. I would hope my fellow citizens would look on the web page, americasupportsyou.mil, to determine how you can help support our troops if you so desire. I would urge Americans to do that, and around the table are leaders of the different organizations that make up this umbrella group. We've heard from people that are helping families of the wounded. We're talking to people who are using their position in different fields, like the entertainment field, to go over and provide hope for our troops. We're talking to moms and wives of those who have volunteered to serve our country.

But I want to thank you all for joining us, and thank you for serving your country. I told the folks here that the politics in Washington can be rough. But make no mistake about it, I am determined to succeed. And we will implement a plan to achieve victory, which is necessary, and that they need to tell the troops that no matter how tough it looks here in the Nation's capital, that I know we're doing the right thing, and I know we will win.

I'll take a couple of questions. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Iraq/U.S. Armed Forces

Q. Mr. President, General Casey saw you on Friday, and it's been reported that he's talked about withdrawing two brigades from Iraq by this year. Can you tell us what he recommended to you?

The President. First of all, I did meet with General Casey, and I met with him because it's very important for me, as well as Secretary Rumsfeld, to meet with our commander on the ground. I've told the American people our commanders will be making the decisions as to how to achieve victory, and General Casey, of course, is the lead person. So we had a good visit with him.

And we talked about a lot of things. The first thing we talked about was the joint operations with the Iraqi forces to secure Baghdad and how that's going. We talked about the actions we're taking in Ramadi. The coalition is in the lead in Ramadi, and we're trying to make sure Ramadi does not become a safe haven for Al Qaida. And so he explained to me the tactics on the ground, what we're doing to secure that city and to run the Al Qaida-types out.

We talked about the Iraqi training mission. And as you well know, our standards are, as Iraqis stand up, the coalition will be able to stand down. And he talked about that kind of progress.

But in terms of our troop presence there, that decision will be made by General Casey, as well as the sovereign Government of Iraq, based upon conditions on the ground. And