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Week Ending Friday, January 26, 2007

Statement on Republican National Committee Leadership

January 19, 2007

The Republican Party has a long and rich history of empowering Americans to determine the future of our country. Today members of the Republican National Committee selected a new team of leaders who will build upon our strong legacy and will encourage more Americans to join our party.

We are fortunate that the Republican National Committee will be under the leadership of Senator Mel Martinez as general chairman, Mike Duncan as chairman, and Jo Ann Davidson as cochairman. Senator Martinez will help our party effectively communicate the Republican message of hope and opportunity for all Americans. Mike Duncan is a proven leader who will organize thousands of dedicated staff and volunteers to educate Americans about the great promise of our agenda. Jo Ann Davidson will continue to draw upon her extensive political experience to help expand our support in communities throughout our country.

I am pleased that this team has been put into place and look forward to working with them on our continued efforts to keep our country safe and prosperous.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

January 20, 2007

Good morning. For many Americans, the new year began with a resolution to live a better and healthier life. Whatever goals you have set for yourself this year, one goal we can all share is reforming our Nation's health care system.

Americans are fortunate to have the best health care system in the world. The Government has an important role to play in our system. We have an obligation to provide care for the most vulnerable members of our society—the elderly, the disabled, and poor children and their parents. We are meeting this responsibility through Medicare, Medicaid, and the State Children's Health Insurance Program. We must strengthen these vital programs, so that they are around when future generations need them.

For all other Americans, private health insurance is the best way to meet their needs. But rising health care costs are making insurance too expensive for millions of our citizens. Health care costs are growing more than two times faster than wages, and this is making it harder for working families to buy insurance on their own. Rising costs are also making it harder for small businesses to offer health coverage to their employees. Our challenge is clear: We must address these rising costs, so that more Americans can afford basic health insurance, and we need to do it without creating a new Federal entitlement program or raising taxes.

Our Nation is making progress toward this goal. We created health savings accounts, which empower patients and can reduce the cost of coverage. We are working to pass association health plans, so that small businesses can insure their workers at the favorable discounts that big businesses get. We must pass medical liability reform, so we can stop the junk lawsuits that drive costs through the roof and good doctors out of practice. We've taken important steps to increase transparency in health care pricing and give patients more information about the quality of their doctors and hospitals.

One of the most promising ways to make private health insurance more affordable is by reforming the Federal Tax Code. Today, the Tax Code unfairly penalizes people who do not get health insurance through their job. It unwisely encourages workers to choose overly expensive, gold-plated plans. The result is that insurance premiums rise, and