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1

President's Radio Address

In Focus: Immigration

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Earlier this week I visited Arizona and Texas to observe firsthand our efforts to protect our southwest border. And I met with customs and border protection agents who are working tirelessly to enforce our laws and keep our borders secure.

Illegal immigration and border security are issues that concern Americans. We're a nation built on the rule of law, and those who enter the country illegally break the law. In communities near our border illegal immigration strains the resources of schools, hospitals, and law enforcement. And it involves smugglers and gangs that bring crime to our neighborhoods. Faced with this serious challenge our government's responsibility is clear. We're going to protect our borders. Since I took office we've increased funding for border security by 60 percent, and our border agents have caught and sent home more than 4.5 million illegal immigrants, including more than 350,000 with criminal records. Yet we must do more to build on this progress.

This week I outlined my comprehensive strategy to reform our immigration system. The strategy begins with a three-part plan to protect our borders. First we will promptly return every illegal entrant we catch at our border, with no exceptions. For illegal immigrants from Mexico, we are working to expand an innovative program called interior repatriation, in which those caught at the border are returned to their hometowns, far from the border, making it more difficult for them to attempt another crossing. For non-Mexican illegal immigrants, we're changing the unwise policy of catch and release to a policy of catch and return, and we're speeding up the removal process.

Second, we must fix weak and unnecessary provisions in our immigration laws, including senseless rules that require us to release illegal immigrants if their home countries do not take them back in a set period of time.

Third, we must stop people from crossing the border illegally in the first place. So we're hiring thousands more Border Patrol agents, we're deploying new technology to expand their reach and effectiveness, and we're constructing physical barriers to entry.

Comprehensive immigration reform also requires us to improve enforcement of our laws in the interior of our country, because border security and interior enforcement go hand-in-hand. In October, I signed legislation that more than doubled the resources for interior enforcement, so we'll increase the number of immigration enforcement agents and criminal investigators, enhance work site enforcement, and continue to go after smugglers, gang members, and human traffickers. Our immigration laws apply across all of America, and we will enforce those laws throughout our land.

Finally, comprehensive immigration reform requires us to create a new temporary worker program that relieves pressure on the border, but rejects amnesty. By creating a legal channel for willing employers to hire willing workers we will reduce the number of workers trying to sneak across the border, and that would free up law enforcement officers to focus on criminals, drug dealers, terrorists, and others who mean us harm.

This program would not create an automatic path to citizenship, and it would not provide amnesty. I oppose amnesty. Rewarding law-breakers would encourage others to break the law and keep pressure on our border. A temporary worker program will relieve pressure on the border and help us more effectively enforce our immigration laws.

Our nation has been strengthened by generations of immigrants who became Americans through patience, hard work, and assimilation. In this new century we must continue to welcome legal immigrants and help them learn the customs and values that unite all Americans, including liberty and civic responsibility, equality under God, tolerance for others, and the English language. In the coming months, I look forward to working with Congress on comprehensive immigration reform that will enforce our laws, secure our border, and uphold our deepest values.

Thank you for listening.

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2

1

President Applauds House for Passing Immigration Reform Bill

 In Focus: Immigration

I applaud the House for passing a strong immigration reform bill. America is a nation built on the rule of law, and this bill will help us protect our borders and crack down on illegal entry into the United States. Securing our borders is essential to securing the homeland. I urge the Senate to take action on immigration reform so that I can sign a good bill into law.

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3

1

President Bush Delivers State of the Union Address

United States Capitol
Washington, D.C.

- State of the Union 2006
- A Strong America Leading the World
- American Competitiveness Initiative
- The Advanced Energy Initiative
- Affordable And Accessible Health Care

9:12 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all. Mr. Speaker, Vice President Cheney, members of Congress, members of the Supreme Court and diplomatic corps, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens: Today our nation lost a beloved, graceful, courageous woman who called America to its founding ideals and carried on a noble dream. Tonight we are comforted by the hope of a glad reunion with the husband who was taken so long ago, and we are grateful for the good life of Coretta Scott King. (Applause.)

Every time I'm invited to this rostrum, I'm humbled by the privilege, and mindful of the history we've seen together. We have gathered under this Capitol dome in moments of national mourning and national achievement. We have served America through one of the most consequential periods of our history -- and it has been my honor to serve with you.

In a system of two parties, two chambers, and two elected branches, there will always be differences and debate. But even tough debates can be conducted in a civil tone, and our differences cannot be allowed to harden into anger. To confront the great issues before us, we must act in a spirit of goodwill and respect for one another -- and I will do my part. Tonight the state of our Union is strong -- and together we will make it stronger. (Applause.)

In this decisive year, you and I will make choices that determine both the future and the character of our country. We will choose to act confidently in pursuing the enemies of freedom -- or retreat from our duties in the hope of an easier life. We will choose to build our prosperity by leading the world economy -- or shut ourselves off from trade and opportunity. In a complex and challenging time, the road of isolationism and protectionism may seem broad and inviting -- yet it ends in danger and decline. The only way to protect our people, the only way to secure the peace, the only way to control our destiny is by our leadership -- so the United States of America will continue to lead. (Applause.)

Abroad, our nation is committed to an historic, long-term goal -- we seek the end of tyranny in our world. Some dismiss that goal as misguided idealism. In reality, the future security of America depends on it. On September the 11th, 2001, we found that problems originating in a failed and oppressive state 7,000 miles away could bring murder and destruction to our country. Dictatorships shelter terrorists, and feed resentment and radicalism, and seek weapons of mass destruction. Democracies replace resentment with hope, respect the rights of their citizens and their neighbors, and join the fight against terror. Every step toward freedom in the world makes our country safer -- so we will act boldly in freedom's cause. (Applause.)

Far from being a hopeless dream, the advance of freedom is the great story of our time. In 1945, there were about two dozen lonely democracies in the world. Today, there are 122. And we're writing a new chapter in the story of self-government -- with women lining up to vote in Afghanistan, and millions of Iraqis marking their liberty with purple ink, and men and women from Lebanon to Egypt debating the rights of individuals and the necessity of freedom. At the start of 2006, more than half the people of our world live in democratic nations. And we do not forget the other half -- in places like Syria and Burma, Zimbabwe, North Korea, and Iran -- because the demands of justice, and the peace of this world, require their freedom, as well. (Applause.)

No one can deny the success of freedom, but some men rage and fight against it. And one of the main sources of reaction and opposition is radical Islam -- the perversion by a few of a noble faith into an ideology of terror and death. Terrorists like bin Laden are serious about mass murder -- and all of us must take their declared intentions seriously. They seek to impose a heartless system of totalitarian control throughout the Middle East, and arm themselves with weapons of mass murder.

Their aim is to seize power in Iraq, and use it as a safe haven to launch attacks against America and the world. Lacking the military strength to challenge us directly, the terrorists have chosen the weapon of fear. When they murder children at a school in Beslan, or blow up commuters in London, or behead a bound captive, the terrorists hope these horrors will break our will, allowing the violent to inherit the Earth. But they have miscalculated: We love our freedom, and we will fight to keep it. (Applause.)

In a time of testing, we cannot find security by abandoning our commitments and retreating within our borders. If we were to leave these vicious attackers alone, they would not leave us alone. They would simply move the battlefield to our own shores. There is no peace in retreat. And there is no honor in retreat. By allowing radical Islam to work its will -- by leaving an assaulted world to fend for itself -- we would signal to all that we no longer believe in our own ideals, or even in our own courage. But our enemies and our friends can be certain: The United States will not retreat from the world, and we will never surrender to evil. (Applause.)

America rejects the false comfort of isolationism. We are the nation that saved liberty in Europe, and liberated death camps, and helped raise up democracies, and faced down an evil empire. Once again, we accept the call of history to deliver the oppressed and move this world toward peace. We remain on the offensive against terror networks. We have killed or captured many of their leaders -- and for the others, their day will come.

We remain on the offensive in Afghanistan, where a fine President and a National Assembly are fighting terror while building the institutions of a new democracy. We're on the offensive in Iraq, with a clear plan for victory. First, we're helping Iraqis build an inclusive government, so that old resentments will be eased and the insurgency will be marginalized.

Second, we're continuing reconstruction efforts, and helping the Iraqi government to fight corruption and build a modern economy, so all Iraqis can experience the benefits of freedom. And, third, we're striking terrorist targets while we train Iraqi forces that are increasingly capable of defeating the enemy. Iraqis are showing their courage every day, and we are proud to be their allies in the cause of freedom. (Applause.)

Our work in Iraq is difficult because our enemy is brutal. But that brutality has not stopped the dramatic progress of a new democracy. In less than three years, the nation has gone from dictatorship to liberation, to sovereignty, to a constitution, to national elections. At the same time, our coalition has been relentless in shutting off terrorist infiltration, clearing out insurgent strongholds, and turning over territory to Iraqi security forces. I am confident in our plan for victory; I am confident in the will of the Iraqi people; I am confident in the skill and spirit of our military. Fellow citizens, we are in this fight to win, and we are winning. (Applause.)

The road of victory is the road that will take our troops home. As we make progress on the ground, and Iraqi forces increasingly take the lead, we should be able to further decrease our troop levels -- but those decisions will be made by our military commanders, not by politicians in Washington, D.C. (Applause.)

Our coalition has learned from our experience in Iraq. We've adjusted our military tactics and changed our approach to reconstruction. Along the way, we have benefitted from responsible criticism and counsel offered by members of Congress of both parties. In the coming year, I will continue to reach out and seek your good advice. Yet, there is a difference between responsible criticism that aims for success, and defeatism that refuses to acknowledge anything but failure. (Applause.) Hindsight alone is not wisdom, and second-guessing is not a strategy. (Applause.)

With so much in the balance, those of us in public office have a duty to speak with candor. A sudden withdrawal of our forces from Iraq would abandon our Iraqi allies to death and prison, would put men like bin Laden and Zarqawi in charge of a strategic country, and show that a pledge from America means little. Members of Congress, however we feel about the decisions and debates of the past, our nation has only one option: We must keep our word, defeat our enemies, and stand behind the American military in this vital mission. (Applause.)

Our men and women in uniform are making sacrifices -- and showing a sense of duty stronger than all fear. They know what it's like to fight house to house in a maze of streets, to wear heavy gear in the desert heat, to see a comrade killed by a roadside bomb. And those who know the costs also know the stakes. Marine Staff Sergeant Dan Clay was killed last month fighting in Fallujah. He left behind a letter to his family, but his words could just as well be addressed to every American. Here is what Dan wrote: "I know what honor is. ... It has been an honor to protect and serve all of you. I faced death with the secure knowledge that you would not have to.... Never falter! Don't hesitate to honor and support those of us who have the honor of protecting that which is worth protecting."

Staff Sergeant Dan Clay's wife, Lisa, and his mom and dad, Sara Jo and Bud, are with us this evening. Welcome. (Applause.)

Our nation is grateful to the fallen, who live in the memory of our country. We're grateful to all who volunteer to wear our nation's uniform -- and as we honor our brave troops, let us never forget the sacrifices of America's military families. (Applause.)

Our offensive against terror involves more than military action. Ultimately, the only way to defeat the terrorists is to defeat their dark vision of hatred and fear by offering the hopeful alternative of political freedom and peaceful change. So the United States of America supports democratic reform across the broader Middle East. Elections are vital, but they are only the

beginning. Raising up a democracy requires the rule of law, and protection of minorities, and strong, accountable institutions that last longer than a single vote.

The great people of Egypt have voted in a multi-party presidential election -- and now their government should open paths of peaceful opposition that will reduce the appeal of radicalism. The Palestinian people have voted in elections. And now the leaders of Hamas must recognize Israel, disarm, reject terrorism, and work for lasting peace. (Applause.) Saudi Arabia has taken the first steps of reform -- now it can offer its people a better future by pressing forward with those efforts. Democracies in the Middle East will not look like our own, because they will reflect the traditions of their own citizens. Yet liberty is the future of every nation in the Middle East, because liberty is the right and hope of all humanity. (Applause.)

The same is true of Iran, a nation now held hostage by a small clerical elite that is isolating and repressing its people. The regime in that country sponsors terrorists in the Palestinian territories and in Lebanon -- and that must come to an end. (Applause.) The Iranian government is defying the world with its nuclear ambitions, and the nations of the world must not permit the Iranian regime to gain nuclear weapons. (Applause.) America will continue to rally the world to confront these threats.

Tonight, let me speak directly to the citizens of Iran: America respects you, and we respect your country. We respect your right to choose your own future and win your own freedom. And our nation hopes one day to be the closest of friends with a free and democratic Iran. (Applause.)

To overcome dangers in our world, we must also take the offensive by encouraging economic progress, and fighting disease, and spreading hope in hopeless lands. Isolationism would not only tie our hands in fighting enemies, it would keep us from helping our friends in desperate need. We show compassion abroad because Americans believe in the God-given dignity and worth of a villager with HIV/AIDS, or an infant with malaria, or a refugee fleeing genocide, or a young girl sold into slavery. We also show compassion abroad because regions overwhelmed by poverty, corruption, and despair are sources of terrorism, and organized crime, and human trafficking, and the drug trade.

In recent years, you and I have taken unprecedented action to fight AIDS and malaria, expand the education of girls, and reward developing nations that are moving forward with economic and political reform. For people everywhere, the United States is a partner for a better life. Short-changing these efforts would increase the suffering and chaos of our world, undercut our long-term security, and dull the conscience of our country. I urge members of Congress to serve the interests of America by showing the compassion of America.

Our country must also remain on the offensive against terrorism here at home. The enemy has not lost the desire or capability to attack us. Fortunately, this nation has superb professionals in law enforcement, intelligence, the military, and homeland security. These men and women are dedicating their lives, protecting us all, and they deserve our support and our thanks. (Applause.) They also deserve the same tools they already use to fight drug trafficking and organized crime -- so I ask you to reauthorize the Patriot Act. (Applause.)

It is said that prior to the attacks of September the 11th, our government failed to connect the dots of the conspiracy. We now know that two of the hijackers in the United States placed

telephone calls to al Qaeda operatives overseas. But we did not know about their plans until it was too late. So to prevent another attack -- based on authority given to me by the Constitution and by statute -- I have authorized a terrorist surveillance program to aggressively pursue the international communications of suspected al Qaeda operatives and affiliates to and from America. Previous Presidents have used the same constitutional authority I have, and federal courts have approved the use of that authority. Appropriate members of Congress have been kept informed. The terrorist surveillance program has helped prevent terrorist attacks. It remains essential to the security of America. If there are people inside our country who are talking with al Qaeda, we want to know about it, because we will not sit back and wait to be hit again. (Applause.)

In all these areas -- from the disruption of terror networks, to victory in Iraq, to the spread of freedom and hope in troubled regions -- we need the support of our friends and allies. To draw that support, we must always be clear in our principles and willing to act. The only alternative to American leadership is a dramatically more dangerous and anxious world. Yet we also choose to lead because it is a privilege to serve the values that gave us birth. American leaders -- from Roosevelt to Truman to Kennedy to Reagan -- rejected isolation and retreat, because they knew that America is always more secure when freedom is on the march.

Our own generation is in a long war against a determined enemy -- a war that will be fought by Presidents of both parties, who will need steady bipartisan support from the Congress. And tonight I ask for yours. Together, let us protect our country, support the men and women who defend us, and lead this world toward freedom. (Applause.)

Here at home, America also has a great opportunity: We will build the prosperity of our country by strengthening our economic leadership in the world.

Our economy is healthy and vigorous, and growing faster than other major industrialized nations. In the last two-and-a-half years, America has created 4.6 million new jobs -- more than Japan and the European Union combined. (Applause.) Even in the face of higher energy prices and natural disasters, the American people have turned in an economic performance that is the envy of the world.

The American economy is preeminent, but we cannot afford to be complacent. In a dynamic world economy, we are seeing new competitors, like China and India, and this creates uncertainty, which makes it easier to feed people's fears. So we're seeing some old temptations return. Protectionists want to escape competition, pretending that we can keep our high standard of living while walling off our economy. Others say that the government needs to take a larger role in directing the economy, centralizing more power in Washington and increasing taxes. We hear claims that immigrants are somehow bad for the economy -- even though this economy could not function without them. (Applause.) All these are forms of economic retreat, and they lead in the same direction -- toward a stagnant and second-rate economy.

Tonight I will set out a better path: an agenda for a nation that competes with confidence; an agenda that will raise standards of living and generate new jobs. Americans should not fear our economic future, because we intend to shape it.

Keeping America competitive begins with keeping our economy growing. And our economy grows when Americans have more of their own money to spend, save, and invest. In the last five years, the tax relief you passed has left \$880 billion in the hands of American workers, investors, small businesses, and families -- and they have used it to help produce more than four years of uninterrupted economic growth. (Applause.) Yet the tax relief is set to expire in the next few years. If we do nothing, American families will face a massive tax increase they do not expect and will not welcome. Because America needs more than a temporary expansion, we need more than temporary tax relief. I urge the Congress to act responsibly, and make the tax cuts permanent. (Applause.)

Keeping America competitive requires us to be good stewards of tax dollars. Every year of my presidency, we've reduced the growth of non-security discretionary spending, and last year you passed bills that cut this spending. This year my budget will cut it again, and reduce or eliminate more than 140 programs that are performing poorly or not fulfilling essential priorities. By passing these reforms, we will save the American taxpayer another \$14 billion next year, and stay on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009. (Applause.)

I am pleased that members of Congress are working on earmark reform, because the federal budget has too many special interest projects. (Applause.) And we can tackle this problem together, if you pass the line-item veto. (Applause.)

We must also confront the larger challenge of mandatory spending, or entitlements. This year, the first of about 78 million baby boomers turn 60, including two of my Dad's favorite people -- me and President Clinton. (Laughter.) This milestone is more than a personal crisis -- (laughter) - it is a national challenge. The retirement of the baby boom generation will put unprecedented strains on the federal government. By 2030, spending for Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid alone will be almost 60 percent of the entire federal budget. And that will present future Congresses with impossible choices -- staggering tax increases, immense deficits, or deep cuts in every category of spending. Congress did not act last year on my proposal to save Social Security -- (applause) -- yet the rising cost of entitlements is a problem that is not going away. (Applause.) And every year we fail to act, the situation gets worse.

So tonight, I ask you to join me in creating a commission to examine the full impact of baby boom retirements on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. This commission should include members of Congress of both parties, and offer bipartisan solutions. We need to put aside partisan politics and work together and get this problem solved. (Applause.)

Keeping America competitive requires us to open more markets for all that Americans make and grow. One out of every five factory jobs in America is related to global trade, and we want people everywhere to buy American. With open markets and a level playing field, no one can out-produce or out-compete the American worker. (Applause.)

Keeping America competitive requires an immigration system that upholds our laws, reflects our values, and serves the interests of our economy. Our nation needs orderly and secure borders. (Applause.) To meet this goal, we must have stronger immigration enforcement and border protection. (Applause.) And we must have a rational, humane guest worker program that rejects amnesty, allows temporary jobs for people who seek them legally, and reduces smuggling and crime at the border. (Applause.)

Keeping America competitive requires affordable health care. (Applause.) Our government has a responsibility to provide health care for the poor and the elderly, and we are meeting that responsibility. (Applause.) For all Americans -- for all Americans, we must confront the rising cost of care, strengthen the doctor-patient relationship, and help people afford the insurance coverage they need. (Applause.)

We will make wider use of electronic records and other health information technology, to help control costs and reduce dangerous medical errors. We will strengthen health savings accounts -- making sure individuals and small business employees can buy insurance with the same advantages that people working for big businesses now get. (Applause.) We will do more to make this coverage portable, so workers can switch jobs without having to worry about losing their health insurance. (Applause.) And because lawsuits are driving many good doctors out of practice -- leaving women in nearly 1,500 American counties without a single OB/GYN -- I ask the Congress to pass medical liability reform this year. (Applause.)

Keeping America competitive requires affordable energy. And here we have a serious problem: America is addicted to oil, which is often imported from unstable parts of the world. The best way to break this addiction is through technology. Since 2001, we have spent nearly \$10 billion to develop cleaner, cheaper, and more reliable alternative energy sources -- and we are on the threshold of incredible advances.

So tonight, I announce the Advanced Energy Initiative -- a 22-percent increase in clean-energy research -- at the Department of Energy, to push for breakthroughs in two vital areas. To change how we power our homes and offices, we will invest more in zero-emission coal-fired plants, revolutionary solar and wind technologies, and clean, safe nuclear energy. (Applause.)

We must also change how we power our automobiles. We will increase our research in better batteries for hybrid and electric cars, and in pollution-free cars that run on hydrogen. We'll also fund additional research in cutting-edge methods of producing ethanol, not just from corn, but from wood chips and stalks, or switch grass. Our goal is to make this new kind of ethanol practical and competitive within six years. (Applause.)

Breakthroughs on this and other new technologies will help us reach another great goal: to replace more than 75 percent of our oil imports from the Middle East by 2025. (Applause.) By applying the talent and technology of America, this country can dramatically improve our environment, move beyond a petroleum-based economy, and make our dependence on Middle Eastern oil a thing of the past. (Applause.)

And to keep America competitive, one commitment is necessary above all: We must continue to lead the world in human talent and creativity. Our greatest advantage in the world has always been our educated, hardworking, ambitious people -- and we're going to keep that edge. Tonight I announce an American Competitiveness Initiative, to encourage innovation throughout our economy, and to give our nation's children a firm grounding in math and science. (Applause.)

First, I propose to double the federal commitment to the most critical basic research programs in the physical sciences over the next 10 years. This funding will support the work of America's most creative minds as they explore promising areas such as nanotechnology, supercomputing, and alternative energy sources.

Second, I propose to make permanent the research and development tax credit -- (applause) -- to encourage bolder private-sector initiatives in technology. With more research in both the public and private sectors, we will improve our quality of life -- and ensure that America will lead the world in opportunity and innovation for decades to come. (Applause.)

Third, we need to encourage children to take more math and science, and to make sure those courses are rigorous enough to compete with other nations. We've made a good start in the early grades with the No Child Left Behind Act, which is raising standards and lifting test scores across our country. Tonight I propose to train 70,000 high school teachers to lead advanced-placement courses in math and science, bring 30,000 math and science professionals to teach in classrooms, and give early help to students who struggle with math, so they have a better chance at good, high-wage jobs. If we ensure that America's children succeed in life, they will ensure that America succeeds in the world. (Applause.)

Preparing our nation to compete in the world is a goal that all of us can share. I urge you to support the American Competitiveness Initiative, and together we will show the world what the American people can achieve.

America is a great force for freedom and prosperity. Yet our greatness is not measured in power or luxuries, but by who we are and how we treat one another. So we strive to be a compassionate, decent, hopeful society.

In recent years, America has become a more hopeful nation. Violent crime rates have fallen to their lowest levels since the 1970s. Welfare cases have dropped by more than half over the past decade. Drug use among youth is down 19 percent since 2001. There are fewer abortions in America than at any point in the last three decades, and the number of children born to teenage mothers has been falling for a dozen years in a row. (Applause.)

These gains are evidence of a quiet transformation -- a revolution of conscience, in which a rising generation is finding that a life of personal responsibility is a life of fulfillment. Government has played a role. Wise policies, such as welfare reform and drug education and support for abstinence and adoption have made a difference in the character of our country. And everyone here tonight, Democrat and Republican, has a right to be proud of this record. (Applause.)

Yet many Americans, especially parents, still have deep concerns about the direction of our culture, and the health of our most basic institutions. They're concerned about unethical conduct by public officials, and discouraged by activist courts that try to redefine marriage. They worry about children in our society who need direction and love, and about fellow citizens still displaced by natural disaster, and about suffering caused by treatable diseases.

As we look at these challenges, we must never give in to the belief that America is in decline, or that our culture is doomed to unravel. The American people know better than that. We have proven the pessimists wrong before -- and we will do it again. (Applause.)

A hopeful society depends on courts that deliver equal justice under the law. The Supreme Court now has two superb new members -- new members on its bench: Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Sam Alito. (Applause.) I thank the Senate for confirming both of them. I will continue to

nominate men and women who understand that judges must be servants of the law, and not legislate from the bench. (Applause.)

Today marks the official retirement of a very special American. For 24 years of faithful service to our nation, the United States is grateful to Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. (Applause.)

A hopeful society has institutions of science and medicine that do not cut ethical corners, and that recognize the matchless value of every life. Tonight I ask you to pass legislation to prohibit the most egregious abuses of medical research: human cloning in all its forms, creating or implanting embryos for experiments, creating human-animal hybrids, and buying, selling, or patenting human embryos. Human life is a gift from our Creator -- and that gift should never be discarded, devalued or put up for sale. (Applause.)

A hopeful society expects elected officials to uphold the public trust. (Applause.) Honorable people in both parties are working on reforms to strengthen the ethical standards of Washington - I support your efforts. Each of us has made a pledge to be worthy of public responsibility -- and that is a pledge we must never forget, never dismiss, and never betray. (Applause.)

As we renew the promise of our institutions, let us also show the character of America in our compassion and care for one another.

A hopeful society gives special attention to children who lack direction and love. Through the Helping America's Youth Initiative, we are encouraging caring adults to get involved in the life of a child -- and this good work is being led by our First Lady, Laura Bush. (Applause.) This year we will add resources to encourage young people to stay in school, so more of America's youth can raise their sights and achieve their dreams.

A hopeful society comes to the aid of fellow citizens in times of suffering and emergency -- and stays at it until they're back on their feet. So far the federal government has committed \$85 billion to the people of the Gulf Coast and New Orleans. We're removing debris and repairing highways and rebuilding stronger levees. We're providing business loans and housing assistance. Yet as we meet these immediate needs, we must also address deeper challenges that existed before the storm arrived.

In New Orleans and in other places, many of our fellow citizens have felt excluded from the promise of our country. The answer is not only temporary relief, but schools that teach every child, and job skills that bring upward mobility, and more opportunities to own a home and start a business. As we recover from a disaster, let us also work for the day when all Americans are protected by justice, equal in hope, and rich in opportunity. (Applause.)

A hopeful society acts boldly to fight diseases like HIV/AIDS, which can be prevented, and treated, and defeated. More than a million Americans live with HIV, and half of all AIDS cases occur among African Americans. I ask Congress to reform and reauthorize the Ryan White Act, and provide new funding to states, so we end the waiting lists for AIDS medicines in America. (Applause.) We will also lead a nationwide effort, working closely with African American churches and faith-based groups, to deliver rapid HIV tests to millions, end the stigma of AIDS, and come closer to the day when there are no new infections in America. (Applause.)

Fellow citizens, we've been called to leadership in a period of consequence. We've entered a great ideological conflict we did nothing to invite. We see great changes in science and commerce that will influence all our lives. Sometimes it can seem that history is turning in a wide arc, toward an unknown shore. Yet the destination of history is determined by human action, and every great movement of history comes to a point of choosing.

Lincoln could have accepted peace at the cost of disunity and continued slavery. Martin Luther King could have stopped at Birmingham or at Selma, and achieved only half a victory over segregation. The United States could have accepted the permanent division of Europe, and been complicit in the oppression of others. Today, having come far in our own historical journey, we must decide: Will we turn back, or finish well?

Before history is written down in books, it is written in courage. Like Americans before us, we will show that courage and we will finish well. We will lead freedom's advance. We will compete and excel in the global economy. We will renew the defining moral commitments of this land. And so we move forward -- optimistic about our country, faithful to its cause, and confident of the victories to come.

May God bless America. (Applause.)

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Memorandum	Immigration Reform Update - To: POTUS - From: Frances Fragos Townsend, Tevi Troy	5	02/26/2006	P5;

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COLLECTION:

Staff Secretary, White House Office of the

SERIES:

Von Der Heydt, Thomas (Tommy) - Bush Record Policy Memos

FOLDER TITLE:

Immigration: A Timeline (2001 - 2008) [2]

FRC ID:

13894

OA Num.:

14457

NARA Num.:

14246

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advise between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Memorandum	Immigration Reform Update - To: POTUS - From: Tevi Troy	4	03/21/2006	P5;

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6

President Participates in Meeting on Comprehensive Immigration Reform

The Roosevelt Room

 In Focus: Immigration

10:37 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: I've just had a very constructive and important dialogue with members of the agricultural community, the faith community, the concerned citizen community about immigration. Ours is a nation of law and ours is a nation of immigrants, and we believe that we can have rational, important immigration policy that's based upon law and reflects our deep desire to be a compassionate and decent nation.

Our government must enforce our borders; we've got plans in place to do so. But part of enforcing our borders is to have a guest worker program that encourages people to register their presence so that we know who they are, and says to them, if you're doing a job an American won't do, you're welcome here for a period of time to do that job.

The immigration debate is a vital debate for our country. It's important that we have a serious debate, one that discusses the issues. But I urge members of Congress and I urge people who like to comment on this issue to make sure the rhetoric is in accord with our traditions. I look around the table and I recognize that we've got people from different backgrounds, different heritages. We all may have different family histories, but we all sit around this table as Americans.

And, therefore, when we conduct this debate it must be done in a civil way. It must be done in a way that brings dignity to the process. It must be done in a way that doesn't pit one group of people against another. It must be done in a way that recognizes our history. I think now is the time for the United States Congress to act to get an immigration plan that is comprehensive and rational and achieves important objectives.

So I want to welcome you all for being here. I want to thank you very much for your involvement in this vital issue. I've assured folks here at the table that I will continue to speak out on the issue. I feel passionately about the need for our country to conduct themselves with dignity and, at the same time, enforce our border and treat people here with respect.

Thank you all very much. (Applause.)

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7

President's Radio Address

In Focus: Immigration

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. On Monday, I will attend a naturalization ceremony here in Washington. It's always inspiring to watch a group of immigrants raise their hands and swear an oath to become citizens of the United States of America. These men and women follow in the footsteps of millions who've come to our shores seeking liberty and opportunity, and America is better off for their hard work and love of freedom.

America is a nation of immigrants, and we're also a nation of laws. And our immigration laws are in need of reform. So at Monday's ceremony, I will discuss my vision for comprehensive immigration reform that will secure our borders, improve enforcement of our immigration laws, and uphold our values.

Comprehensive immigration reform begins with securing our borders. Since I took office, we've increased funding for border security by 66 percent, and the Department of Homeland Security has caught and sent home nearly 6 million illegal immigrants. To improve security at the border, we're hiring thousands more Border Patrol agents. We're deploying new technology, like infrared cameras and unmanned aerial vehicles, to help our agents do their job. And we're installing physical barriers to entry, like fences in urban areas.

We're also working to end the unwise practice of catch-and-release. For decades, many illegal immigrants were released back into society soon after they were caught, because we did not have enough detention space. So we're adding more beds so we can hold the people we catch, and we're reducing the time it takes to send them back home. When illegal immigrants know they will be caught and sent home, they will be less likely to break the rules, and our immigration system will be more orderly and secure. We're making good progress, but we have much more work ahead, and we will not be satisfied until we have control of our border.

Comprehensive immigration reform also includes strengthening the enforcement of our laws in America's interior. Since I took office, we've increased funding for immigration enforcement by 42 percent. We're increasing the number of immigration enforcement agents and criminal investigators, enhancing work site enforcement, and going after smugglers and gang members and human traffickers.

Finally, comprehensive immigration reform requires a temporary worker program that will relieve pressure on our borders. This program would create a legal way to match willing foreign workers with willing American employers to fill jobs that Americans will not do. By reducing the number of people trying to sneak across the border, we would free up our law enforcement officers to focus on criminals and drug dealers and terrorists and others who mean us harm.

One thing the temporary worker program would not do is provide amnesty to those who are in our country illegally. I believe that granting amnesty would be unfair, because it would allow those who break the law to jump ahead of people who play by the rules and wait in the citizenship line. Amnesty would also be unwise, because it would encourage waves of illegal immigration, increase pressure on the border, and make it more difficult for law enforcement to focus on those who mean us harm. For the sake of justice and for the sake of border security, I firmly oppose amnesty.

In the coming days, the United States Senate plans to consider proposals on immigration reform. This is an emotional debate. America does not have to choose between being a welcoming society and being a lawful society. We can be both at the same time. As we debate the immigration issue, we must remember there are hard-working individuals, doing jobs that Americans will not do, who are contributing to the economic vitality of our country.

To keep the promise of America, we must enforce the laws of America. We must also ensure that immigrants assimilate into our society and learn our customs and values -- including the English language. By working together, we can meet our duty to fix our immigration system and deliver a bill that protects our country, upholds our laws, and makes our Nation proud.

Thank you for listening.

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3

President Attends Naturalization Ceremony

DAR Administration Building
Washington, D.C.

 Fact Sheet: Comprehensive Immigration Reform: Securing Our Border, Enforcing Our Laws, and Upholding Our Values

 In Focus: Immigration

10:12 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all. Thank you very much. It's good to be with you. I am grateful for the chance to witness this joyous and uplifting ceremony. It is inspiring to see people of many different ages, many different countries raise their hands and swear an oath to become citizens of the United States of America.

For some of you, this day comes after a long and difficult journey. For all of you, this is a defining moment in your lives. America is now more than your home; America is your country. I welcome you to this free nation. I congratulate you and your families, and it's an honor to call you fellow Americans.

I appreciate the Attorney General. Dr. González, thank you, sir. And, Alfonso, it's good to be up here with you. I want to thank the President General of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Ms. Presley Wagoner, for letting us use this fantastic facility for this important ceremony. Thank you for singing the National Anthem so beautifully.

It is fitting that we hold this ceremony at the home of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The Daughters of the American Revolution were the daughters of immigrants, because the leaders of our revolution all had ancestors who came from abroad. As new citizens of the United States, you now walk in the footsteps of millions. And with the oath you've sworn, you're every bit as American as those who came before you.

Our immigrant heritage has enriched America's history. It continues to shape our society. Each generation of immigrants brings a renewal to our national character and adds vitality to our culture. Newcomers have a special way of appreciating the opportunities of America, and when they seize those opportunities, our whole nation benefits.

In the 1970s, an immigrant from Ireland -- or the 1790s, an immigrant from Ireland designed the White House, right where Laura and I live. And he helped build the Capitol. In the 1990s, an immigrant from Russia helped create the Internet search engine Google. In between, new citizens have made contributions in virtually every professional field, and millions of newcomers have strengthened their communities through quiet lives and hard work and family and faith.

America's welcoming society is more than a cultural tradition, it is a fundamental promise of our democracy. Our Constitution does not limit citizenship by background or birth. Instead, our nation is bound together by a shared love of liberty and a conviction that all people are created with dignity and value. Through the generations, Americans have upheld that vision by welcoming new citizens from across the globe -- and that has made us stand apart.

One of my predecessors, President Ronald Reagan, used to say this, "You can go to live in France, but you cannot become a Frenchman. You can go to live in Japan, but you cannot become Japanese. But anyone, from any corner of the world, can come to live in America and be an American."

The new Americans we welcome today include men and women from 20 countries on five continents. Their ages range from 18 to 59, and they work as teachers and small business managers, and nurses, and software engineers and other professions.

One new citizen is Veronica Pacheco. Veronica first came to the United States from Bolivia 15 years ago. In 2000, she moved here permanently and found a job at a catering company in Virginia. Every Friday and Saturday, she spent five hours studying English at the local community college. Over the years she saved enough money to buy her own townhouse. Here's what Veronica says about America: "This is a country of opportunity. If you want to be successful, you can do it. You can have your dreams come true here."

Another new citizen is Maisoon Shahin. Maisoon grew up in Kuwait, and moved to the United States with her husband seven years ago. She enrolled in the community college to improve her English, took a job teaching Marines to speak Arabic. Here's what Maisoon said: "The United States is a symbol of justice, freedom and liberty. I love that. Here they respect people because they are people. I feel I am honored, and I feel that I'm loved."

America is stronger and more dynamic when we welcome new citizens like Masoon and Veronica to our democracy. With that in mind, I've called on Congress to increase the number of green cards that can lead to citizenship. I support increasing the number of visas available for foreign-born workers in highly-skilled fields like science, medicine and technology. I've signed legislation creating a new Office of Citizenship at the Department of Homeland Security to promote knowledge of citizenship rights and procedures.

And after September the 11th, I signed an executive order making foreign-born members of our military immediately eligible for citizenship, because those willing to risk their lives for our democracy should be full participants in our democracy.

Over the past four years, more than 20,000 men and women in uniform have become citizens of the country they serve. They've taken the citizenship oath on the decks of aircraft carriers, on deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq, and at military bases around the world. At Bethesda Naval Medical Center, I watched a brave Marine born in Mexico raise his right hand and become a citizen of the country he had defended in uniform for more than 26 years. It's a privilege to be the Commander-in-Chief of men and women like these, and I'm proud to call them fellow citizens.

All who swear the oath of citizenship are doing more than completing a legal process. They're making a lifelong pledge to support the values and the laws of America. The pledge comes with great privileges, and it also comes with great responsibilities. I believe every new citizen has an obligation to learn the customs and values that define our nation, including liberty and civic responsibility, equality under God, tolerance for others, and the English language.

Those of us who have been citizens for many years have responsibilities, as well. Helping new citizens assimilate is a mission that unites Americans by choice and by birth. I appreciate the work of patriotic organizations like the Daughters of the American Revolution. Some of the new

Americans here today might have used DAR's Manual for Citizenship to prepare you for the citizenship test. They obviously did a pretty good job, since you passed. (Laughter.)

Many other organizations, from churches to businesses to civic organizations, are answering the call to help new citizens succeed in our country, and I am grateful for all those who reach out to people who are going to become citizens.

Government is doing its part to help new citizens succeed, as well. The Office of Citizenship has created a new official guide for immigrants. This free publication includes practical advice on tasks like finding housing and jobs, or enrolling your children in school, or paying taxes.

We're conducting outreach programs with faith-based and community groups to offer civics and English language courses. My administration will continue to pursue policies that open a path to education and jobs, promote ownership, and to give every citizen a chance to realize the American Dream.

Our nation is now in the midst of the debate on immigration policy, and it's good. Immigration is an important topic. Immigration is also an emotional topic. And we need to maintain our perspective as we conduct this debate. At its core, immigration is a sign of a confident and successful nation. It says something about our country that people around the world are willing to leave their homes and leave their families and risk everything to come to America. Their talent and hard work and love of freedom have helped make America the leader of the world. And our generation will ensure that America remains a beacon of liberty and the most hopeful society the world has ever known.

America is a nation of immigrants, and we're also a nation of laws. All of you are here because you followed the rules and you waited your turn in the citizenship line. Yet some violate our immigration laws and enter our country illegally, and that undermines the system for all of us. America should not have to choose between being a welcoming society and being a lawful society. We can be both at the same time. And so, to keep the promise of America, we must enforce the laws of America.

We must also reform those laws. No one is served by an immigration system that allows large numbers of people to sneak across the border illegally. Nobody benefits when illegal immigrants live in the shadows of society. Everyone suffers when people seeking to provide for their families are left at the mercy of criminals, or stuffed in the back of 18-wheelers, or abandoned in the desert to die. America needs comprehensive immigration reform.

I've laid out a proposal for comprehensive immigration reform that includes three critical elements: securing the border, strengthening the immigration enforcement inside our country, and creating a temporary worker program. These elements depend on and reinforce one another, and together they will give America an immigration system that meets the needs of the 21st century.

The first element is securing our border. Our immigration system cannot function if we cannot control the border. Illegal immigration puts a strain on law enforcement and public resources, especially in our border communities. Our nation is also fighting a war on terror, and terrorists crossing the border could create destruction on a massive scale. The responsibility of government is clear: We must enforce the border.

Since I took office, we've increased funding for border security by 66 percent. We've expanded the Border Patrol to more than 12,000 agents, an increase of more than 2,700 agents. And the budget next year funds another 1,500 new agents. We're helping these dedicated men and women do their jobs by providing them with cutting-edge technology, like infrared cameras, advanced motion sensors, and unmanned aerial vehicles. We're installing protective infrastructure, such as vehicle barriers and fencing in urban areas, to prevent people from crossing the border illegally. And we're integrating manpower and technology and infrastructure in more unified ways than ever. Our objective is to keep the border open to trade and tourism, and closed to criminals and drug dealers and terrorists.

Our strategy to secure the border is getting results. Since I took office, our agents have apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering this country illegally, including more than 400,000 with criminal records. Federal, state and local and travel enforcement officials are working side-by-side. Through the Arizona Border Control Initiative we apprehended more than 600,000 illegal immigrants in Arizona last year. The men and women of our Border Patrol have made good progress, but we have much more work ahead and we cannot be satisfied until we're in full control of the border.

We're also changing the way we process those we catch crossing the border illegally. More than 85 percent of the illegal immigrants we apprehend are from Mexico, and most are sent back home within 24 hours. We face a different challenge with non-Mexicans. For decades, government detention facilities did not have enough beds for the non-Mexican illegal immigrants caught at the border and so most were released back into society. They were each assigned a court date, but virtually nobody showed up. This practice, catch-and-release, is unwise, and my administration is going to end it.

To end catch-and-release, we're increasing the number of beds and detention facilities by 12 percent this year, and by another 32 percent next year. We're also expanding our use of a process called expedited removal, which allows us to send non-Mexican illegal immigrants home more quickly.

Last year, it took an average of 66 days to process one of these illegal immigrants. Now, we're doing it in 21 days. The goal is to increase the process faster. It's helped us end the catch-and-release for illegal immigrants from Brazil and Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua caught crossing our Southwest border. And since last summer, we've cut the number of non-Mexican illegal immigrants released in society by more than a third. We've set a goal to end catch-and-release over the next year. I look forward to working with Congress to close loop holes that makes it difficult for us to process illegal immigrants from certain countries. And we will continue to press foreign governments, like China, to take back their citizens who have entered our country illegally.

When illegal immigrants know they're going to be caught and sent home, they will be less likely to break the rules in the first place. And the system will be more orderly and secure for those who follow the law.

The second part of a comprehensive immigration reform is strengthening enforcement of our laws in the interior of our country. Since I took office, we've increased funding for immigration enforcement by 42 percent, and these resources have helped our agents bring to justice some

very dangerous people: smugglers, terrorists, gang members, and human traffickers. For example, through Operation Community Shield, federal agents have arrested nearly 2,300 gang members who were here illegally, including violent criminals like the members of MS-13.

Better interior enforcement also requires better work site enforcement. Businesses have an obligation to abide by the law. The government has the responsibility to help them do so. Last year, I signed legislation to more than double the resources dedicated to work site enforcement. We'll continue to confront the problem of document fraud, because hard-working business owners should not have to act as detectives to verify the status of their workers.

Next month, we're going to launch law enforcement task forces in 11 major cities to dismantle document fraud rings. We're working to shut down the forgers who create the phony documents to stop the smugglers who traffic in human beings, and to ensure that American businesses are compliant with American law.

The third part of comprehensive immigration reform is to make the system more rational, orderly, and secure by creating a new temporary worker program. This program would provide a legal way to match willing foreign workers with willing American employers to fill the jobs that Americans are unwilling to do. Workers should be able to register for legal status on a temporary basis. If they decide to apply for citizenship, they would have to get in line. This program would help meet the demands of a growing economy and would allow honest workers to provide for their families while respecting the law.

A temporary worker program is vital to securing our border. By creating a separate legal channel for those entering America to do an honest day's labor, we would dramatically reduce the number of people trying to sneak back and forth across the border. That would help take the pressure off the border and free up law enforcement to focus on the greatest threats to our security, which are criminals and drug dealers and terrorists.

The program would also improve security by creating tamper-proof identification cards that would allow us to keep track of every temporary worker who is here on a legal basis and help us identify those who are here illegally.

One thing the temporary worker program should not do is provide amnesty for people who are in our country illegally. I believe granting amnesty would be unfair, because it would allow those who break the law to jump ahead of people like you all, people who play by the rules and have waited in the line for citizenship.

Amnesty would also be unwise, because it would encourage future waves of illegal immigration, it would increase pressure on the border and make it difficult for law enforcement to focus on those who mean us harm. For the sake of justice and border security, I firmly oppose amnesty.

This week, the Senate plans to consider legislation on immigration reform. Congress needs to pass a comprehensive bill that secures the border, improves interior enforcement, and creates a temporary worker program to strengthen our security and our economy. Completing a comprehensive bill is not going to be easy. It will require all of us in Washington to make tough choices and make compromises. And that is exactly what the American people sent us here to do.

As we move toward the process, we also have a chance to move beyond tired choices and the harsh attitudes of the past. The immigration debate should be conducted in a civil and dignified way. No one should play on people's fears, or try to pit neighbors against each other. No one should pretend that immigrants are threats to American identity, because immigrants have shaped America's identity.

No one should claim that immigrants are a burden on our economy because the work and enterprise of immigrants helps sustain our economy. We should not give into pessimism. If we work together, I'm confident we can meet our duty to fix our immigration system and deliver a bill that protects our people, upholds our laws, and makes our people proud.

It's a joyful day for all of you, and it's one you'll always remember. When you came here this morning, I was the President of another country. Now I'm the President of your country, and I'm grateful for that honor. I wish you good luck as citizens of the greatest nation on the face of the Earth.

May God bless you and your families, and may God continue to bless America. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

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Fact Sheet: Comprehensive Immigration Reform: Securing Our Border, Enforcing Our Laws, and Upholding Our Values

In Focus: Immigration

Today, President Bush Attended A Naturalization Ceremony And Discussed His Vision For Comprehensive Immigration Reform. The President supports comprehensive immigration reform to secure our border, improve enforcement of our laws, and uphold our values. The President also discussed his proposal for a temporary worker program that rejects amnesty, allows foreign workers to fill jobs no American is willing to do, and reduces smuggling and crime at the border.

- **America's Immigrant Heritage Continues To Shape Our Society.** Our Nation is bound together by liberty and a conviction that all people are created with equal dignity and value. Through the generations, Americans have upheld that vision by welcoming new citizens from across the globe. Immigrants have helped shape our identity and sustain our economy.
- **The President Strongly Believes America Is Stronger And More Dynamic When New Citizens Are Welcomed.** The President has called on Congress to increase the number of green cards that can lead to citizenship. He supports increasing the number of visas available for foreign-born workers in highly skilled fields. The President signed legislation creating a new Office of Citizenship at the Department of Homeland Security to promote knowledge of citizenship rights and procedures; the Office of Citizenship created a new official guide for immigrants, and the Administration is working with faith-based and community groups to offer civics and English-language courses. In July 2002, the President signed an Executive Order making foreign-born members of our military immediately eligible for citizenship. Over the past four years, more than 20,000 men and women in uniform have become citizens.
- **Every New Citizen Makes A Lifelong Pledge To Support The Values And Laws Of America.** New citizens have an obligation to learn the customs and values that define our Nation - including liberty and civic responsibility, equality under God, tolerance for others, and the English language.

The President Welcomes A Civil And Dignified Debate On Comprehensive Immigration Reform. Congress is now considering immigration reform proposals. Immigration is an emotional topic, and we need to maintain our perspective as we conduct this debate.

To Keep The Promise Of America, We Must Enforce The Laws Of America

President Bush's Proposal For Comprehensive Immigration Reform Includes Three Critical Elements - Securing The Border, Strengthening Enforcement Inside The Country, And Creating A Temporary Worker Program. These elements depend on and reinforce one another. Together, they will give America an immigration system that meets 21st century demands.

The First Element Is Securing Our Border. Since President Bush took office, funding for border security has increased by 66 percent. The Border Patrol has been expanded to more than

12,000 agents, an increase of more than 2,700 agents, or nearly 30 percent. The President's FY07 budget funds another 1,500 new agents. Agents are being provided with cutting-edge technology like infrared cameras, advanced motion sensors, and unmanned aerial vehicles. Protective infrastructure, such as vehicle barriers and fencing in urban areas, is being installed. Manpower, technology, and infrastructure are being integrated in more unified ways than ever before.

- **The Administration's Border Security Strategy Is Getting Results.** Since President Bush took office, agents have apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering the country illegally - including more than 400,000 with criminal records. Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement are working together. More than 600,000 illegal immigrants were apprehended through the Arizona Border Control Initiative last year - an increase of more than 50 percent increase over the previous year. The men and women of our Border Patrol have made good progress - but we have much more work ahead, and we will not be satisfied until our agents have full control of our border.
- **The Administration Is Ending The Practice Of "Catch And Release."** The President has set a goal to end "catch and release" over the next year. Most illegal immigrants from Mexico can be returned to Mexico within 24 hours. Non-Mexican illegal immigrants present a different challenge. For decades, government detention facilities did not have enough beds for the non-Mexican illegal immigrants caught at the border - so most were released back into society. They were each assigned a court date, but virtually no one showed up. The Administration is ending the practice of "catch and release" by increasing the number of beds in detention facilities by 12 percent this year; the President's FY07 budget proposes increasing that number by another 32 percent. The Administration is expanding the use of "expedited removal," which allows us to send non-Mexican illegal immigrants home more quickly.
 - **We Are Making Progress In This Effort.** Last year, it took an average of 66 days to process a non-Mexican illegal immigrant. Now, the process is taking only 21 days. This has helped us end "catch and release" for illegal immigrants from Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua caught crossing our Southwest border. Since last summer, the total number of non-Mexican illegal immigrants released into society has been cut by more than a third. There is more work ahead, and the Administration will work with Congress to close loopholes that make it difficult to process illegal immigrants from certain countries and will continue pressing foreign governments like China to take back their citizens who enter our country illegally.

The Second Element Is Strengthening Enforcement Of Our Laws In The Interior Of Our Country. Since President Bush took office, funding for immigration enforcement has increased by 42 percent. These resources have helped agents bring to justice smugglers, terrorists, gang members, and human traffickers. For example, through Operation Community Shield, Federal agents have arrested nearly 2,300 gang members who were in America illegally, including violent criminals like the members of the "MS-13" gang.

- **Better Interior Enforcement Requires Better Worksite Enforcement.** Last year, President Bush signed legislation to more than double the resources dedicated to worksite

enforcement. Next month, the Administration will launch new law enforcement task forces in 11 cities to dismantle document fraud rings.

The Third Element Is Creating A New Temporary Worker Program That Would Not Provide Amnesty. A temporary worker program would make the system more rational, orderly, and secure by providing a legal way to match willing foreign workers with willing American employers to fill jobs that no American is willing to do. Workers would be able to register for legal status on a temporary basis. If workers decided to apply for citizenship, they would have to get in line. This program would help meet the demands of our growing economy and allow honest workers to provide for their families while respecting the law.

- **A Temporary Worker Program Is Vital To Securing The Border.** Creating a separate, legal channel for those entering America to do an honest day's labor would dramatically reduce the number of people attempting to sneak back and forth across the border. That would help take pressure off the border and free up law enforcement to focus on the greatest threats to our security - terrorists, drug dealers, and other criminals. The program would also improve security by creating tamper-proof identification cards that would allow authorities to keep track of every temporary worker who is in America on a legal basis and help authorities identify those who are here illegally.
- **A Temporary Worker Program Should Not Provide Amnesty.** Granting amnesty unfairly allows those who break the law to jump ahead of people who play by the rules and wait in the citizenship line. Amnesty would also encourage future waves of illegal immigration, increase pressure on the border, and make it more difficult for law enforcement to focus on those who mean us harm. For the sake of justice and the sake of border security, the President firmly opposes amnesty.

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President's Radio Address

In Focus: Immigration

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. This week, Members of the United States Senate reached a promising bipartisan compromise on comprehensive immigration reform. Unfortunately, this compromise is being blocked by the Senate Democratic leader who has refused to allow Senators to move forward and vote on amendments to this bill. I call on the Senate Minority Leader to end his blocking tactics and allow the Senate to do its work and pass a fair, effective immigration reform bill.

Immigration is an emotional issue and a vitally important one. At its core, immigration is the sign of a confident and successful nation. It says something about our country that people around the world are willing to leave their homes, leave their families, and risk everything to come to America. Their talent, hard work, and love of freedom have helped make America a vibrant, strong Nation. And by reforming our immigration laws to meet the realities of the 21st century, we will ensure that America remains a beacon of liberty for generations to come.

I made clear that a comprehensive immigration reform bill must include three elements:

First, comprehensive immigration reform must secure our borders. Since I took office, we've increased funding for border security by 66 percent, and Federal agents have apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering this country illegally, including more than 400,000 with criminal records. To improve security at the border, we're hiring thousands more Border Patrol agents; we're deploying new technologies like infrared cameras and unmanned aerial vehicles to help our agents do their jobs; we're installing physical barriers to entry, like fences in urban areas. We're making good progress, but we have much more work ahead to gain control of our border. I'll continue to work with Congress to strengthen border security, so we can prevent illegal immigrants from crossing our border and make the immigration system more orderly and secure.

Second, comprehensive immigration reform must strengthen the enforcement of our laws in America's interior. Since I took office, we've increased funding for immigration enforcement by 42 percent, increased the number of immigration enforcement agents and criminal investigators, enhanced worksite enforcement, and gone after smugglers, gang members, and human traffickers. A good immigration bill should enhance our ability to stop document fraud and help employers comply with our laws.

Finally, comprehensive immigration reform must include a temporary worker program that relieves pressure on our borders, while rejecting amnesty. A temporary worker program would create a legal way to match willing foreign workers with willing American employers to fill jobs that no American is available to do. By creating a legal channel for those seeking temporary work in America, we would reduce the number of people trying to sneak across the border. This would free up law enforcement officers to focus on criminals, drug dealers, terrorists, and others who mean us harm. A temporary worker program would also improve security by creating tamper-proof identification cards, so we can keep track of every temporary worker who is here on a legal basis and identify those who are not.

A new temporary worker program should not provide amnesty. Granting amnesty would be unfair to those who follow the rules and obey the laws. Amnesty would also be unwise, because it would encourage others to break the law and create new waves of illegal immigration. We must ensure that those who break our laws are not granted an automatic path to citizenship. We should also conduct the debate on immigration reform in a manner worthy of our Nation's best traditions.

To keep the promise of America, we must remain a welcoming society and also enforce the laws that make our freedom possible. As we do, our Nation will draw strength from the diversity of its citizens and unity from their desire to assimilate and become one people. By working together, we can fix our immigration system in a way that protects our country, upholds our laws, and makes our Nation proud.

Thank you for listening.

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President Discusses Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Hyatt Regency Irvine
Irvine, California

 Fact Sheet: Comprehensive Immigration Reform: Securing Our Border

 In Focus: Immigration

9:14 A.M. PDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all. Please be seated. (Applause.) Thanks for letting me come by. Tom, thanks for the invitation. What I thought I would do is share some thoughts with you on some issues that kind of like may be on the TV screen these days. (Laughter.) And then answer some of your questions. I'm interested to know what's on your mind.

First, I've had a fabulous trip to your unbelievably beautiful state. It started off in northern California, Cisco; then I went to Stanford; then I went to Napa Valley; then I rode my bicycle on Earth Day in Napa Valley. Then I found out the mountains are a little steep in Napa Valley. (Laughter.) I then went down and spent fantastic time in Palm Springs. What an unbelievably diverse state and it's a fantastic place to end my journey, here in Orange County. I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come by and visit with you.

Laura sends her very best. I, of course, checked in with her this morning before I headed over here to see if she had any additional instructions for me for the day. (Laughter.) She said, keep it short. (Laughter.) I'm a lucky man to have Laura as a wife. You can imagine what it's like to be President -- there's some pressure on your family, as you can imagine. The good news is I've got a 45-second commute. (Laughter.) And the better news is I've got a wife who is a fantastic First Lady who shares a passion with me to do the best we can for our country. (Applause.)

I want to thank Lucy Dunn, as well as thanking Tom for putting this event together. I appreciate the members of the Orange County Business Council. I want to thank Congressman John Campbell for his service. Appreciate you. He's the Congressman from this district, by the way. And Catherine is with us. I thank -- Congresswoman Mary Bono is with us today. Mary, thank you for being here. (Applause.) I just spent some quality time in her district, and I forgot to tell you that I had the privilege of riding my mountain bike in the desert, as well. The national monument that she helped put together to preserve open spaces -- she's got a lot of humility, she didn't name the national monument after herself. If I were to name it I would say, Really Hard Bike Ride Monument. (Laughter.)

I want to thank Congressman Ken Calvert for joining us today. Ken, it's good to see you, proud of you. (Applause.) Congressman Gary Miller is with us today. Congressman, thank you. (Applause.) Mayor Beth Krom of the city of Irvine -- Madam Mayor, thank you for being here. Thanks for serving. (Applause.) There you are, Mayor. Thank you. (Applause.) Appreciate you coming. Thanks for serving. I had -- last night, by the way, I had dinner with the Mayor of Los Angeles and Mayor of Long Beach and Mayor of Anaheim, and some other mayors that came.

It's real important for the President to pay attention to people, what's on their mind, and that's what I'm here to do today. I want to share some things that's on my -- first of all, Rick Warren, by the way, is here. Where are you, Rick? There you go. I appreciate you. (Applause.) Still got

the calendar in the desk. (Laughter.) Ambassador Argyros, good to see you, George. George served our country as the ambassador to Spain. Thank you. (Applause.)

I got a lot on my mind these days; I want to share two thoughts with you. First, I want to talk about the war on terror. I wish I could report to you that the war on terror was over. It's not. There is still an enemy that wants to do us harm. And the most important job of the President of the United States is to protect the American people from that harm. That's -- and I think about it all the time.

As you know, well, I make a lot of decisions, and at the core of my decision-making when it comes to protecting America is the lessons learned from September the 11th, 2001. My job is to use the resources of the United States to prevent such an attack from happening again. And the first lesson of September the 11th, 2001 is that we face an enemy that had no regard for innocent life, an enemy which has hijacked a great religion to suit their political needs.

And therefore, the only way to deal with them is to stay on the offense to pressure them, and to bring them to justice which is precisely what the United States of America is doing and will continue to do for the safety of the American people. (Applause.)

The second lesson is we must deny these folks safe haven. They need to find safe haven from which to plot and plan. We denied safe haven in Afghanistan, and we're denying them safe haven in Iraq.

One of the important things that a President must do is to take the words of the enemy very seriously. And when the enemy speaks, and they speak quite often, we listen carefully. We listen to their aims and their objectives. These are not a kind of isolated, angry people. These are folks bound together by an ideology that is totalitarian in nature. They believe that capitalism produces weak societies. They want to spread their idea of life throughout the Middle East. They have stated so in word after word. And they believe that with time, they can establish a safe haven in Iraq.

And here's the danger of having an enemy with a safe haven in Iraq, Iraq has got wealth. Iraq has -- had weapons of mass destruction and has the knowledge as to how to produce weapons of mass destruction. And the confluence of a terrorist network with weapons of mass destruction is the biggest threat the United States of America faces. They have said it's just a matter of time.

And they've got a powerful weapon, by the way -- the enemy does. And that is the willingness and capacity to kill innocent people. And they understand the United States of America is a compassionate nation. They view -- I'm sure they view it as a weakness of our country, I happen to view it as a strength that we value every life, that every person is precious. But they know, and it doesn't take much to realize that when you put carnage on our TV screens, it causes us to weep. It causes people rightly to say whether or not the cause is worth it. It's a legitimate question for the American people.

But it's very important for the American people to understand that they're trying to run us out of Iraq for a purpose. And the purpose is to be able to have safe haven from which to launch further attacks. And I understand it. And we've got a strategy in place to achieve victory.

Yesterday I went over to Twentynine Palms -- I want to tell you something about the United States military. These young men and women are incredibly dedicated. They are motivated. They understand that we must defeat the enemy over there so we do not have to face them here at home. Most of them raised their hand to volunteer after September the 11th. Many of them have said, I want to continue to serve our country. We're lucky to have people like them willing to o serve. And the United States government, whether you agree with my policy or not, must stand by our troops. When they're in harm's way, they deserve the best pay, the best equipment, and the best possible support. (Applause.)

And I told them, I told them they didn't have to worry about me. I believe we're going to win in Iraq. And a victory in Iraq will be a major blow to the totalitarian vision of bin Laden and his lieutenants -- a major blow. One, it will be a tactical blow. We'll deny them that which they want. But secondly, it will be a major blow because, in the long-term, the best way to defeat an ideology of hatred is with an ideology of hope.

I based a lot of my foreign policy decisions on some things that I think are true. One, I believe there's an Almighty, and secondly, I believe one of the great gifts of the Almighty is the desire in everybody's soul, regardless of what you look like or where you live, to be free. I believe liberty is universal. I believe people want to be free. And I know that democracies do not war with each other. And I know that the best way to defeat the enemy, the best way to defeat their ability to exploit hopelessness and despair is to give people a chance to live in a free society.

You know, the Iraqis went to the polls last December for the third time in one year. It seems like a decade ago, doesn't it? It seems like it was just an eternity ago that 12 million people defied terrorists, threats, and said, we want to be free. We're sick and tired of a society that had been suppressed by a brutal tyrant. We want to go to the polls. We want to be self-governing. I wasn't surprised; I was pleased, but not surprised. If you believe that liberty exists in the soul of each person on the face of the Earth, it shouldn't surprise you that, given the chance, people will say, we want to be free. And now the role of the United States is to stand by the courageous Iraqis as their democracy develops.

It's not easy work, by the way, to go from tyranny to democracy. We had kind of a round go ourself, if you look back at our history. My Secretary of State's relatives were enslaved in the United States even though we had a Constitution that said all were -- that believed in the dignity, or at least proclaimed to believe in the dignity of all. The Articles of Confederation wasn't exactly a real smooth start for our government to begin. And what you're watching on your TV screens is a new democracy emerging. And I had the privilege of calling the President of Iraq, the new Speaker of Iraq, and the Prime Minister-designee of Iraq, there in the comfort of my hotel room in Palm Desert -- Palm Springs. And I can't tell you how heartened I was to hear their words.

First of all, they expressed great appreciation for the American people, and our troops, and the families of our troops. Secondly, to a person -- this is a Kurd, a Shia, and a Sunni I'm talking to -- each one of them said, we want to have a national unity government. We're sick of the sectarian violence. We believe if you stand with us, we can achieve our objective of becoming a democracy that listens to the people. And I believe them. And I believe them. And I told them -- I said, look, it's going to be up to you to make it work, but you can count on the United States of

America because we believe in liberty and the capacity of liberty to change lives and to change the neighborhood for a more peaceful tomorrow.

This is a new chapter in our relationship. We had an important milestone when the unity government was formed, and now there's a new chapter in the relationship and we're moving forward.

You know, it's really important for people to be able to connect the concept of freedom to our security. And it's hard. It's hard, particularly in a day and age when every act of violence is put in your living room. And I know that. I fully understand the challenge I face as the Commander-in-Chief to describe to the American people why the sacrifice is worth it.

And perhaps the best way to do so is to share one of my favorite lessons of history with you, and that is that my relationship with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan is a special relationship. He's an interesting guy. And he's a friend, and we work to keep the peace. We sit down -- when we sit down, we talk about the importance of democracy developing in Iraq. The Japanese had troops, by the way, in Iraq to help this young country. We talked about North Korea. We talk about issues of peace. I find it so interesting and so ironic that those are the conversations I have with him, especially since 60 years ago, my dad -- and I suspect many of your relatives -- fought the Japanese as an enemy.

And so what happens between 18-year-old G.H.W. Bush, Navy fighter pilot, signing up to fight the sworn enemy of Japanese, and his son sitting down to talk about the peace? And what happened was Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy. Democracy can help change the world and lay the foundation for peace. And that's what's happening today. These are historic times. My job is to lead this to protect you. And my job is to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come. And that is why I told those Marines yesterday that we're going to complete the mission. (Applause.)

I got a lot of others things to talk about. I want to talk about immigration. So I saw my friend Brulte, he's an ex-politician, you know? Always a friend. He said, people are wondering why you would come to Orange County to talk about immigration. (Laughter.) And the answer is because that's what a leader does.

I want to talk to you, tell you my thoughts about the subject. First of all, I understand it is an emotional subject. And it's really important that those of us who have microphones and can express ourselves do so in a respectful way that recognizes we are a nation of immigrants, that we have had a grand tradition in this country of welcoming people into our society. And ours is a society that is able to take the newly arrived, and they become equally American. I believe that immigration has helped reinvigorate the soul of America. I know that when somebody comes to our country because he or she has a dream and is willing to work hard for that dream, it makes America a better place.

Now, first and foremost, the federal government has the role to enforce our border. The American people are right in saying to the government, enforce the border. Listen, I was an old border governor. I understand it's important to enforce our border. And we are. We got a lot of good people down there working hard on the border to keep people from -- and contraband, or whatever -- from coming into this country illegally. We've increased the number of Border

Patrol. And I want to thank to Congresswoman and Congressmen here for being wise about providing resources to increase the number of patrol on the border. But that's not enough.

We've got to have modern equipment to be able to help people find people that are coming across a very long and difficult border to protect. We got infrared. Unmanned vehicles are being -- aerial vehicles -- UAVs are being deployed. We're now beginning to modernize our border so that the people we've asked to enforce the border have got the tools necessary to do so. In parts of the rural border there needs to be berms to prevent people from flying across in their SUVs, smuggling people into America. And we're strengthening this border. I'll tell you something that's interesting. Since 2001, 6 million people have been caught illegally trying to get in this country, and turned back -- 6 million people. So people are working down there, and they're working hard.

And I'm going to continue to work with Congress. I know these people from Congress are interested in providing the Border Patrol and those responsible for enforcing the border the tools necessary to do their job, and I thank you for that.

Secondly, we have got a problem with -- we have a problem we're going to solve this year, by the way, of catching people from -- non-Mexican illegal immigrants, and just sending them back into society. There weren't enough detention beds. So you got the people down there working hard -- 6 million people crossing since 2001 and sent home. But most of the Mexican citizens who were caught trying to illegally come in the country were sent back to their country. But if you catch somebody from Central America coming back, you just can't send them back for a while, so there needs to be a place to detain them. We didn't have enough bed space. And so we had catch-and-release. We're asking people to go down there and do their job, and they find somebody from Central America sneaking in and they say, check back in with us in 45 days, come and see your immigration guy down there. (Laughter.) And they weren't checking back in after 45 days. (Laughter.) They were coming to work, see. They wanted to put food on the table for their families, and they weren't interested in checking back in.

And so it meant there was a lot of wasted effort by the Border Patrol. We're going to change that. One of the things that Congress has done, it's done a good job of providing additional money for bed space and money to make sure that we can send people back home. You got people coming up who want to work, see. They're going broke at home; they want to put food on the table; they go to unbelievable lengths to come and feed their families. We're catching them, we're putting them back in -- we're stopping that. Our job is to enforce this border -- 6 million people have been turned back. And we got a strategy in place to make sure that this border is as tight as it possibly can be.

Secondly, in order to make sure immigration laws work, you got to enforce the laws on the books, see. If it's illegal to hire somebody, then the federal government has got to enforce those laws. We're a nation of law. And by the way, you can be a nation of law and a compassionate nation at the same time. You don't have to be -- (applause.)

Now, the problem we have is you got some person out there in central Texas needing a worker, and he can't find a worker, an American. So he says, look, anybody help me find somebody, I got something to do. This economy is growing, see -- 4.7 unemployment rate nationwide. Pretty good numbers. And people are having trouble finding work that Americans won't do. And that's

a fact of life. And so he says, why don't you send somebody over to help me? And they show up and they put a Social Security card out there and it looks real. You know, our small business owners are not document checkers. These are people trying to get ahead, and it's impossible to -- (applause.) It's impossible to really effect the enforcement of our laws if people are able to use forged documents.

Now, we've increased the amount of manpower there to hold people to account for hiring illegals, but it is difficult to hold somebody, an employer to account if they're putting false papers on -- the truth of the matter is, what's happened is people are trying to come in this country and we got smugglers smuggling them in. And they're putting them in the back of 18-wheelers, stuffing human beings in the back of trucks, because people are coming to do jobs Americans won't do. They're putting people out in deserts. We've lost a lot of people, a lot of decent, hardworking people, trying to come in this country in the desert, losing their lives. These smugglers are coyotes, they're kind of preying on innocent life, and they've got a whole document forgery industry going on.

See, we made it such that an underground industry thrives on human beings, people coming to do work that the Americans will not do. And so I think that the best way to enforce our border and the best way, besides making sure it's modern and we've got manpower and equipment down there, which we do, and it's increasing every week, is to come up with a rational plan that recognizes people coming here to work and let them do so on a temporary basis. That's why I'm for a temporary worker program that will -- (applause) -- that says to a person, here is a tamper-proof card that says, you can come and do a job an American won't do, fill a need. A tamper-proof card all of a sudden makes interior enforcement work. In other words, we now know who's getting the cards and we know they can't be tampered with. So the guy says, show me your tamper-proof card before I hire you. And if they do, fine. But if they don't, say, I'm not hiring you. You got to have the card to get work.

Secondly, we got a lot of people across the border to do jobs. It is really hard to enforce the border with people sneaking across to do a job. Doesn't it make sense to have a rational, temporary worker plan that says you don't need to sneak across the border. You can come on a temporary basis to do a job Americans won't do. So you don't have to sneak across -- so you don't have to pay money to a coyote that stuffs you in the back of a truck, so you don't have to burden our borders.

Look, we want our Border Patrol hunting gun smugglers and dope runners. And it just seems rational to me and logical to me that says, okay, fine, you can come and do a job Americans won't do for a temporary period of time with a tamper-proof card.

All of a sudden, we've kind of taken this smuggling industry and dismantled it through rational policy. All of a sudden, we recognized that we want to treat people with respect. I know this an emotional debate. And I can understand it's emotional. But one thing we cannot lose sight of is that we're talking about human beings, decent human beings that need to be treated with respect. (Applause.)

Massive deportation of the people here is unrealistic. It's just not going to work. You can hear people out there hollering it's going to work. It's not going to work. It just -- and so therefore,

what do we do with people who are here? And this is one of the really important questions Congress is going to have to deal with.

I thought the Senate had an interesting approach by saying that if you've been here for five years or less, you're treated one way, and five years or more, you're treated another. It's just an interesting concept that people need to think through about what to do with people that have been here for quite a period of time.

Now, my attitude is this: I think that people ought to be, obviously, here to work on a temporary basis. The definition of temporary will be decided in the halls of Congress.

Secondly, I believe that a person should never be granted automatic citizenship. And let me tell you why I believe that, that if you've been here -- broken the law and have been here working, that it doesn't seem fair to me to say you're automatically a citizen when somebody who has been here legally working is standing in line trying to become a citizen, as well. In other words, there's the line for people. (Applause.)

But what I do think makes sense is that a person ought to be allowed to get in line. In other words, pay a penalty for being here illegally, commit him or herself to learn English, which is part of the American system -- (applause) -- and get in the back of the line. In other words, there is a -- there is a line of people waiting to become legal through the green card process. And it's by nationality. And if you're a citizen here who has been here illegally, you pay a penalty, you learn English, and you get in line, but at the back -- not the front. And if Congress wants a shorter line for a particular nationality, they increase the number of green cards. If they want a longer line, they shrink the number of green cards per nationality.

This is an important debate for the American citizens to conduct. It's a debate that requires clear rational thought, and it's really important for those of us in positions of responsibility to remember that we're a nation of law, a welcoming nation, a nation that honors people's traditions no matter where they're from because we've got confidence in the capacity of our nation to make us all Americans, one nation under God.

And so that's what's on my mind today -- got a lot of other things, if you're interested. But I -- (applause) -- I got some time for some -- I'd like to answer some questions if you got any, or hear from you.

Yes, sir.

Q Morning, sir. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Pretty good. I think I'm doing all right, yes. (Laughter.)

Q I understand you get a lot of tough questions and you're very candid person, so assuming that you agree with the fact that no one is perfect --

THE PRESIDENT: I agree with that.

Q Good.

THE PRESIDENT: Especially me. (Laughter.)

Q I'd like to get your candid response to your perspective from the outside looking in, and now the inside looking out. Before you became President, obviously, you had some perceptions based on your family history, being governor, what it would be like to be President of the U.S. Now that you are President, and you've had a chance to go through the experience and you're in your second term, candidly, if you had it to do over, would there be anything that you'd do differently?

THE PRESIDENT: I appreciate it. The fundamental question

-- the threshold question is would I run, the first place. That's really the first question that one would ask. Now that I'm here, seeing what it's like, would I do it again, and the answer is, absolutely.

I have enjoyed this experience in a way that's hard for me to describe to you. Listen, there have been some rough moments. But it is an incredible honor to serve our country.

The second threshold question is, would I commit troops to protect the American people. It's really a fundamental question. Knowing what I know today, would I have done anything differently with our troops.

First, you got to know that the hardest decision for a President is to put anybody in harm's way -- because I fully understand the consequences of making such a decision. I was at church yesterday in Twentynine Palms. In the pew that I was sitting in was a mother and step-father grieving for a guy who lost his life. And I knew that I would have to deal with this as best as I possibly can.

I also wanted to let you know that it's before you commit troops that you must do everything you can to solve the problem diplomatically. And I can look you in the eye and tell you I feel I've tried to solve the problem diplomatically to the max, and would have committed troops both in Afghanistan and Iraq knowing what I know today. (Applause.)

Obviously, as we look back -- and every war plan is perfect until it meets the enemy. It's fine on paper until you actually start putting it into practice. And there is a -- decisions like preparing an Iraqi army for a -- external threat. Well, it turns out, there may have been an external threat, but it's nothing compared to the internal threat. We got in and started trying to build some big reconstruction projects right off the bat. And it didn't make any sense because it was easy -- they became convenient targets for the enemy. And so we started to decentralize -- this kind of -- I'm getting down to the minutia. But there are some tactics that -- when I look back -- that we could have done differently.

The fundamental question on the Iraq theater, though, is did we put enough troops in there in the first place. That's the debate in Washington. I'm sure you've heard about it. Let me just tell you what happened. I called Tommy Franks in with Don Rumsfeld and said, Tommy, if we're going in, you design the plan and you got what you need. I said -- I remember the era when politicians were trying to run wars, people trying to fine-tune this or fine-tune that. One the lessons of Vietnam, it seemed like to me -- still does -- is that people tried to make decisions on behalf of the military, which I think is a terrible precedent to make if you're the Commander-in-Chief. By the way, you can't run a war, you can't make decisions based upon polls and focus groups, either.

And so I told Tommy, I said, you know you got what you need. And then it's my -- then the fundamental question is, do I think he's comfortable telling the Commander-in-Chief what's real and isn't real. So I spent a lot of time with Tommy, and the first time I'm with him I'm trying to figure out whether or not he has got the ability to walk in the Oval Office -- which can be kind of an intimidating place -- and say, here's what I think, Mr. President.

I was comforted by the fact that Tommy and I were raised in the same part of the world. He went to Midland Lee High School with Laura, by the way. I felt like -- I felt like that there was kind of a kinship to begin with, and I'm confident, sir, that Tommy told me exactly what was on his mind. I believe that. And so, therefore, the troop level that he suggested was the troop level necessary to do the job. And I support it strongly.

And I fully understand people are going to think back and, could you have done something different, or not different. And that's fair. And it's worthwhile. And we still have members of Congress who are coming in -- and they should -- are coming in and say, Mr. President, have you thought about this, or are you going to do that. And we're constantly adjusting on the ground to meet an enemy which changes. But on the big decisions of sending the troops in, I'd have done it again.

Thank you. Great question. (Applause.)

Yes, sir.

Q Good morning. My name is Jamie Law (sp) and I'm 14 years old, and I was wondering what America is going to be like in 10 years. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Here's what America needs to be like -- maybe 20 -- (laughter) -- 10 to 20. You need to be driving an automobile with hydrogen as the main source of power. (Applause.) And at the very least, with a hybrid -- a plug-in battery of a hybrid vehicle that will let you get the first 40 miles without using gasoline. In other words, between 10 to 20 years from now we got to get off Middle Eastern oil. It's a problem. (Applause.)

You'll be able to see a technology, a technology that will be -- enable you to converse with somebody on long distance and it seems like the person is right there in the room with you. I saw that at Cisco. It's an amazing technology that will mean that education changes to the better. You can hire -- if you got yourself a state like we got in Texas, that's rural, you can get a chemistry professor from one of the urban centers and put them on the screen and it's like the professor is right in the room, teaching. There's a way to husband resources.

You'll have the capacity to interface with people around the world in a real-time basis. You'll be able to talk more clearly. Information will become even more powerful than it is today. And the fundamental question is, what do we do with that information. You'll be confronted with very difficult choices when it comes to science. The first choice we all have to deal with right off the bat is whether or not it's okay to destroy life to save life. In other words, as technology progresses, as this country of ours is more technologically advanced, you're going to be confronted with serious ethical choices. There will be a clash between morality and science that will present some really difficult decisions for people.

You'll be able to have a leader that can go and sit down with a duly-elected leader of a major Middle Eastern country, saying, how can we keep the peace together. I believe you'll see there's a democracy movement moving across the Middle East over the next 10 years. Much of it is going to be led by women who don't want to be a second-class citizen in any society. I think you'll see a relationship between the United States and other great powers that will enable us to work together to be able to provide a stable platform.

What I hope you don't see is a nation that loses its nerve and becomes isolationist and protectionist. That's one of my concerns, so I put it in the State of the Union. It was such a concern that, instead of going with, here are the 29 things we're going to do either for you or to you, it was -- (laughter) -- I talked about isolation and protectionism. It's very important for this nation to be a confident nation and to remain a leader of the world. You cannot win the war on terror if you kind of pull back and say, let somebody else deal with it.

You can't do your duty as a nation that should subscribe to the theory that to whom much is given, much is required -- and that duty is to help deal with HIV/AIDS, for example, on the continent of Africa. We have a duty to help feed the hungry, in my judgment. (Applause.)

What I hope you don't see is a nation that loses its confidence in the capacity to trade with countries like China. Hu Jintao was -- came to visit, and we had a wonderful visit with him. But I know there are some Americans who wonder whether or not it's worth the effort to try to out-compete with China. They look at the statistics and they worry about whether or not it is possible to compete with China. I say, you bet it's possible to compete with China. And not only can we compete with China, if we have a level playing field we'll do just fine.

And so what I'm telling you is I hope you have a nation that, at home is one that is able to balance technology and ethical concerns, a nation, by the way -- I hope those taxes remain low, see. One of the things you got to make sure -- (applause) -- you got to have that proper balance between what government really needs and money in your pocket.

Anyway -- great question, by the way, for a 14-year-old guy. I'm not so sure if I were 14 I'd have been able to get that question out. I might have been a little nervous. (Laughter.)

Let's see -- yes, ma'am.

Q First of all, I want to thank you for coming to Orange County. I don't know who said it wasn't a good idea, but I think it's a great idea. And we love you, so thank for being here. (Applause.) I very much support your immigration plan. I think it's a good framework. But the one question I have -- last year my daughter fell and broke her hip -- she's 12. And it was five hours in the emergency room at the hospital before she could see a doctor. And a lot of people in the ER were there because it was their primary medical facility --

THE PRESIDENT: Correct.

Q So in your plan, how do you plan to address health care and schools and so forth that are really impacted?

THE PRESIDENT: Community health centers. We -- this administration, working with the Congress, has funded the expansion of what's called community health centers. Community

health centers are places for the poor and the indigent to get primary care so to do exactly what -- to address the problem that you described, which is primary care in emergency rooms are costly, they are -- it's not a cost-effective treatment -- I guess it is once you get the treatment, but it's not cost-effective overall and, therefore, the advent of community health centers.

And I don't know if you've got them here in Orange County; I hope you do. I bet you do. You don't have any? Well, get to working, Congressman. (Laughter and applause.) But that's the best way, really, to be able to address the issue, whether it be for an immigrant who is here, or anybody else that cannot afford health care. The best place to get primary care is not the emergency rooms. And so we've got a comprehensive strategy. And we're expanding them all across the country. And I'm surprised you don't have one here. I bet you do, and you just don't know it. And, therefore, what needs to happen is there needs to be a campaign to explain what's available for people so that they don't go to the emergency rooms.

Yes, sir.

Q Mr. President, I emigrated from Cuba when I was about nine years old -- legally, I might add.

THE PRESIDENT: Pedro Pan? Were you Pedro Pan?

Q No.

THE PRESIDENT: No? Okay.

Q But anyway, besides marrying a wonderful woman and having two great sons, coming to this great land is the best thing that has ever happened to me. And I appreciate your comments on immigration. And my question to you, Mr. President, is that I would like to go to Cuba, to travel, to see -- I want to go see my front door that was bullet-riddled when they were fighting Batista's guys. And I can't go there legally. And I don't understand, how can we trade with Vietnam -- we lost over 50,000 Americans there -- how can we trade with Communist China, we can't even go to Cuba? And I think if the borders were opened up with Cuba and American enterprise got to go down there, I think Castro would fall like a rock off a cliff. And my question to you, sir, is why can't we open --

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, here's why --

Q Yes. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Here's why: Fidel Castro has got the capacity to arbitrage your dollars to the advantage of his administration. You pay in dollars, he pays in Cuban money and collects the difference. So you go to a hotel in Havana, the money goes to the hotel, which has kind of got a deal with the government in order to be there in the first place, and the workers get paid in a currency that's worthless compared to the U.S. dollar. And he makes the balance. And so, in all due respect, I have taken the position that trade with the country enables a tyrant to stay in power, as opposed to the opposite. Honest disagreement of opinion -- I fully recognize -- but that's why I made the decision I made. And anyway, my preacher, by the way, at St. John the Divine Church, is a guy who came from Cuba at about the same age you did. You look a little younger than he is -- but, nevertheless, that's why. That's why.

Yes, sir.

Q As you said, you make a lot of important decisions on a day-by-day basis. I'm interested in the personal, as well as political aspects of your counsel. Do you know any illegal status individuals coming from Midland, Texas? What do they feel? And how do they counsel you on this? And also, politically, it's an intensely state-specific issue. Are the states most affected by illegal immigration, speaking in a collective voice?

THE PRESIDENT: Really good question. No, I don't believe I know anybody who is in Texas illegally. Had I hired somebody who had been here illegally, I guarantee you'd have read about it. (Laughter and applause.)

Isn't that right, Elisabeth?

The interesting thing about this issue -- I want to be respectful in correcting you about the nature of the immigration debate -- it is more widespread than you think. It really is. There's a lot of states who have been affected, and maybe impacted in a much more different way than California and Texas has been. Texas and California are -- have had a history of Latino presence. It's been a part of our heritage. But there are many communities in the United States that for the first time are getting to become acquainted with the Latino heritage. And that probably impacts people even more significantly than parts of California and Texas. It really does. And so there is a universal concern about the issue. And what's really important about this issue is to try to set aside all the emotion and think about how to solve the problem in a rational, calm way.

But, no, it's -- people -- obviously, if you're from -- I was talking to a congressman from -- I don't want to -- they'll start trying to find the guy, so I'm not going to give him any hints, but -- (laughter.) It's a guy. Anyway, but he said, my town was like a small number of minorities, and now it's 50 percent Latino, and we don't know what to do. And this is a new phenomenon. This isn't something that's been around for decades. This is a brand-new phenomenon. And so there is a national concern about this issue. It really is. And, obviously, it takes -- it reflects the nature of the local community, flares up one way or another around the country. But there's a lot of people talking about it. And it's -- we've got to get something done. I want a comprehensive bill. I don't want -- (applause.)

Yes, sir, back there in the end zone.

Q Mr. President, Bill Habermehl, County Superintendent of Schools. For us to compete globally, we need to get better in math and science. What do you see as the role of the federal government in that regard?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, thanks. First, the role of the federal government is to make sure that we get it right at the early grades. And that's why I worked hard for and was extremely proud to sign the No Child Left Behind Act. And the No Child Left Behind Act starts with these basic premises: One, children can learn, and we ought to expect them to learn. I know that sounds simple. But that's not the way it was in certain school districts. You look like a vet, and you know full well that in certain school districts, just move them through, man. What mattered was the age, not what -- the level of knowledge.

Secondly, that accountability can be used effectively, particularly if it's designed at the local level. In other words, you can use an accountability system to determine whether or not curriculum is working, or you can use an accountability system to determine how your school district is doing relative to the school district next-door to you. You can use an accountability system to determine whether or not we're closing an achievement gap that needs to be closed if America is going to be a promising place for all people, not just some, but all people.

And so I worked with both Republicans and Democrats -- it actually can happen sometimes in Washington that we're able to work together -- and passed the No Child Left Behind Act, which said, in return for federal money -- in increasing amounts, by the way -- on particularly Title I money, we expect you just to show us. We expect you to measure. You notice I didn't say, we expect you to administer the test we designed. I'm a local-control-of-schools person, and I knew that if a federal test were designed, it could force people to behave according to the tests. In other words, you could cause people to lose their independence if you're the test designer. And so I said, California, design your own test, and measure 3 through 8 and post the results for everybody to see so that concerned citizens, when they saw a failure, would have something to say to the -- to you to change. Or, thank you for doing what you're doing.

And as a result of measuring, I can report to you that math scores and science scores for 4th graders and reading scores

-- math and reading scores for 4th graders and 8th graders -- on the rise, particularly amongst African American and Latino students.

Things are changing. It's amazing what happens when you say, there's accountability in the system. The problem is, as you know full well, but others may not, is that when a child gets to high school, our math and science skills, relative to other countries in the world, is abysmal. And it's not right. And we're not going to be able to compete successfully for the jobs of the 21st century. So here's the strategy: Apply the same rigor in math that we've applied in reading.

And here's what happens: In early grades in reading, if you don't pass the test, there is supplemental service money to enable a child to get up to speed. In other words, we diagnose the problem and we're actually providing money to solve the problem, and it's paying off. They ought to apply the same rigor to 8th grade math and 9th grade math -- measure to find deficiencies and provide extra money for school districts to make sure children get back up to speed.

Secondly, it is very important for there to be role models in classrooms that basically says science and math are cool. They weren't too cool when I was going to school, you know. And therefore, one of the things we can do is have adjunct professors in classrooms. I went to a school with Margaret Spellings, who is the Secretary of Education, in Maryland the other day, and there were two NASA scientists there. And part of their job was not only to work at the NASA facility close-by, but to go into classrooms, to say to children, math and science are really important for you.

Thirdly, AP works -- advanced placement. I bet you've got some good AP teachers. The advanced placement program is the way to set high standards for our children. And so, therefore, the federal government ought to help train 70,000 AP teachers in classrooms. That says, we

believe in setting high standards; we ought not to accept a system that doesn't continue to raise the bar and measure and hold people to account.

Finally, we've got an additional 1 million students on Pell grants. These are grants to help people who can't afford college go to college. And they're very important -- it's a very important tool to help people realize dreams. But I think we ought to enhance the Pell grants for those who take rigorous academics in high school for years one and two. And if you maintain a 3.0 grade point average and take science, math, or critical languages in third and fourth year of college, you ought to get an additional \$4,000 on top of your Pell grant.

There is a strategy; the strategy of the federal government is a part of the strategy. The local school district is an integral part of the strategy. Thanks for being a superintendent, appreciate it. (Applause.)

Yes, sir.

Q I'm a civil engineer, and we recently put out a report card for the nation's infrastructure and -- by the American Society of Civil Engineers. It was abysmal, is the word that you've used. And we're really concerned that our nation is coming to a crisis on its infrastructure. And yet, we seem to have problems with the federal government coming up with the funds that we need for the various parts of our transportation and our water resources.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I appreciate that very much. We passed a pretty good sized highway bill -- like really big. And it's a six-year bill, and so it's -- we've got five more years to run on it. But it was a pretty interesting struggle about how much to spend and how much not to spend. And I think if you look at the history of that highway bill, pretty much the bill I signed was more than some thought was necessary.

I did talk to your Governor about an important subject, and that's the levees. And I appreciated his time the other day when I was in -- up there in Cisco Systems. And we talked about the levees, and I said, we want to help. He's committed, by the way, to rebuilding the infrastructure of California. It's a good, strong commitment. And it's what governors do, they lead. But he said, look, we need to work together on this, and what he wanted -- what his office suggested is that we allow the state of California to use the Corps of Engineers to pay the federal share of levee rebuilding when the water goes down, and then through the budget process, reimburse the state of California. I agreed to that.

In other words, the Governor is concerned about being able to get started enough on -- quick enough on levee repairs so we don't waste time. And part of the concern is there's a sharing arrangement between the federal government and the state government. And so I said, advance the state share -- advance the federal share through state money and we'll reimburse you. That's an important beginning. In other words, the funding match is not an excuse. And secondly, he needs regulatory relief from federal law and state law, in order to be able to take advantage of the dry season to get the levees done. And so we're working with him on that.

And -- but, no, I appreciate your concern. It's -- infrastructure is always a difficult issue. It's a federal responsibility and a state and local responsibility. And I, frankly, feel like we've upheld our responsibility at the federal level with the highway bill. There are other infrastructures we got to get built. We need a broadband highway all across America if we're going to end up being

a competitive nation. I talked about the ability to be able to converse in real-time, speedy and very fast ways. But that requires us to make sure that broadband is effectively distributed all across the country -- not just in big cities, but out in rural America, as well. And we're working hard on right-of-way issues and other issues to get broadband extensively spread throughout the country.

Yes, sir.

Q Mr. President, I want to thank you for being here in Orange County. In your first term you came to Santa Ana, if you'll recall --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q -- you met with the museum -- it was a wonderful chat we had with several of the leadership. Your honor, I -- don't call you "your honor" already -- (laughter.) We believe, as you know, the Latino community is America.

THE PRESIDENT: Por cierto.

Q Por cierto. And we believe that the effort that you're putting forth as a comprehensive legislation is what we need in this country. We believe that the economy is going to be great. We believe that the issue that has been raised about the possible changes and possible funding for many infrastructures, as well as emergency services will be there, because we're going to make these people to pay taxes, just like you and I. So we thank you for that.

We just want to ask you a question. What is it that we need to do, and you need to do to make sure Congress will pass this comprehensive immigration bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's starting right here. You know, you've been on vacation and now start to work the issue. And one way to work it, stand right here in front of these cameras in California, talking about it in a candid way. And I'm going to do my part to continue to call this nation to responsible dialogue and remind the United States Congress we need to get a comprehensive bill passed.

The state of play right now is the Senate reached an important compromise, and it was -- they had a chance to get a bill, it just got caught up in, in my judgment, needless politics. One of the problems we face in Washington is we've got too much needless politics. We got people who aren't willing to -- they want to play -- they want to make the other person look bad, as opposed to make the country look good. And I'm going to continue to call people, whether it be on Social Security reform, or immigration reform, to think about the country first, and put our political parties aside. And I'm confident, if we can do that, we'll come up with a rational plan that will make the country proud.

I'd like to stay here all day, but I got to go to Vegas. (Laughter.) Something about what goes on there, stays there -- or something like that. (Applause.) God bless you. Thanks for letting me come. (Applause.)

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Fact Sheet: Comprehensive Immigration Reform: Securing Our Border

 **In Focus: Immigration**

Today's Presidential Action

Today, President Bush Discussed His Vision For Comprehensive Immigration Reform. The President calls on Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform to secure our border, improve enforcement of our laws, meet the needs of our economy, and uphold our highest values. The President also discussed his proposal for a temporary worker program that rejects amnesty, allows foreign workers to fill jobs that Americans are not willing to do, and reduces illegal immigration, smuggling, and crime at the border.

- **America's Heritage Of Immigration Continues To Shape Our Society.** Our Nation is bound together by liberty and a conviction that all people are created with equal dignity and value. America is stronger and more dynamic when new citizens are welcomed. The President has called on Congress to increase the number of green cards that can lead to citizenship, and he supports increasing the number of visas available for foreign-born workers in highly skilled fields. New citizens have an obligation to learn the customs and values that define our Nation - including liberty and equality for all, respect for the beliefs of others, justice under the law, and the English language.

The President's Proposal For Comprehensive Immigration Reform Includes Three Critical Elements - Securing The Border, Strengthening Enforcement Inside The Country, And Creating A Temporary Worker Program. These elements depend on and reinforce one another. Together, they will give America an immigration system that meets 21st century demands.

Securing Our Border

President Bush Is Taking Action To Increase The Manpower, Technology, And Infrastructure Needed To Secure The Nation's Border. Since President Bush took office, funding for border security has increased by 66 percent. The Border Patrol has been expanded to more than 12,000 agents, an increase of more than 2,700 agents, or nearly 30 percent. The President's FY07 budget funds another 1,500 new agents. Agents are being provided with cutting-edge technology like infrared cameras, advanced motion sensors, and unmanned aerial vehicles. Protective infrastructure, such as vehicle barriers and fencing in urban areas, is being installed. Manpower, technology, and infrastructure are being integrated in more coordinated ways than ever before.

- **The Administration's Border Security Strategy Is Getting Results.** Since President Bush took office, agents have apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering the country illegally - including more than 400,000 with criminal records. Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement are working together. More than 600,000 illegal immigrants were apprehended through the Arizona Border Control Initiative last year - an increase of more than 50 percent over the previous year. The men and women of our Border Patrol have made good progress - but we have much more work ahead, and we will not be satisfied until our agents have full control of our border.

- **The Administration Is Ending The Practice Of "Catch-And-Release."** The President has set a goal to end "catch-and-release" over the next year. Most illegal immigrants from Mexico can be returned to Mexico within 24 hours. Non-Mexican illegal immigrants present a different challenge. For decades, government detention facilities did not have enough beds for the non-Mexican illegal immigrants caught at the border - so most were released back into society. They were each assigned a court date, but virtually no one showed up. The Administration is ending the practice of "catch-and-release" by increasing the number of beds in detention facilities by 12 percent this year; the President's FY07 budget proposes increasing that number by another 32 percent. The Administration is expanding the use of "expedited removal," which allows us to send non-Mexican illegal immigrants home more quickly.
 - **We Are Making Progress In This Effort.** Last year, it took an average of 66 days to process a non-Mexican illegal immigrant. Now, the process is taking only 21 days. This has helped us end "catch-and-release" for illegal immigrants from Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua caught crossing our Southwest border. Since last summer, the total number of non-Mexican illegal immigrants released into society has been cut by more than a third. There is more work ahead, and the Administration will work with Congress to close loopholes that make it difficult to process illegal immigrants from certain countries and will continue pressing foreign governments like China to take back their citizens who enter our country illegally.

Strengthening Enforcement Of Immigration Laws In America's Interior

The President Is Providing Resources To Strengthen Enforcement Of Immigration Laws. Since President Bush took office, funding for immigration enforcement has increased by 42 percent. These resources have helped agents bring to justice smugglers, terrorists, gang members, and human traffickers. For example, through Operation Community Shield, Federal agents have arrested nearly 2,300 gang members who were in America illegally, including violent criminals like the members of the "MS-13" gang.

- **Better Interior Enforcement Requires Better Worksite Enforcement.** Last year, President Bush signed legislation to more than double the resources dedicated to worksite enforcement. We are working to hold businesses accountable and crack down on document forgery. Next month, the Administration will launch new law enforcement task forces in 11 cities to dismantle document fraud rings.

Creating A New Temporary Worker Program That Would Not Provide Amnesty

A Temporary Worker Program Would Make The System More Rational, Orderly, And Secure By Providing A Legal Way To Match Willing Foreign Workers With Willing American Employers To Fill Jobs That Americans Are Not Willing To Do. Workers would be able to register for legal status on a temporary basis. If workers decided to apply for citizenship, they would have to get in line. This program would help meet the demands of our growing economy and allow honest workers to provide for their families while respecting the law.

- **A Temporary Worker Program Is Vital To Securing The Border.** Creating a separate, legal channel for those entering America to do an honest day's work would dramatically reduce the number of people attempting to sneak across the border. That would help take pressure off the border and free up law enforcement to focus on the greatest threats to our security - terrorists, drug dealers, and other criminals. The program would also improve security by creating tamper-proof identification cards that would allow authorities to keep track of every legal temporary worker, while making it more difficult for illegal immigrants to evade the law.
- **A Temporary Worker Program Should Not Provide Amnesty.** Granting amnesty would be unfair because it would allow those who break the law to jump ahead of people who play by the rules and wait in the citizenship line. Amnesty would also encourage future waves of illegal immigration, increase pressure on the border, and make it more difficult for law enforcement to focus on those who mean us harm. For the sake of justice and the sake of border security, the President firmly opposes amnesty.

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President Discusses Immigration Reform with Members of the Senate

Cabinet Room

 In Focus: Immigration

4:23 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: I want to thank the members of the United States Senate for joining on a very important discussion, and the discussion was how to get a comprehensive immigration bill out of the United States Senate.

I will report to the American people that there is a common desire to have a bill that enforces the border, a bill that has interior enforcement -- in other words, a bill that will hold people to account for hiring somebody who is here illegally -- but a bill that also recognizes we must have a temporary worker program, a bill that does not grant automatic amnesty to people, but a bill that says, somebody who is working here on a legal basis has the right to get in line to become a citizen.

I thank the members, both Republicans and Democrats, for taking on this really hard, hard assignment. It's important that we reform a system that is not working. It's important that we uphold the values of the United States of America. It's important that we treat people with dignity.

And I strongly believe that we have a chance to get an immigration bill that is comprehensive in nature to my desk before the end of this year.

And again, I want to thank both the Republicans and Democrats for the spirit of hard work. I particularly want to thank Senator Kennedy and Senator McCain for taking the lead on this important bill on the floor of the United States Senate. And I assured the members that I look forward to working with them as they try to get a bill out of the Senate by Memorial Day and into conference.

Thank you all.

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President Bush Addresses the Nation on Immigration Reform

The Oval Office

 [Fact Sheet: Comprehensive Immigration Reform](#)

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 [In Focus: Immigration](#)

8:01 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good evening. I've asked for a few minutes of your time to discuss a matter of national importance -- the reform of America's immigration system.

The issue of immigration stirs intense emotions, and in recent weeks, Americans have seen those emotions on display. On the streets of major cities, crowds have rallied in support of those in our country illegally. At our southern border, others have organized to stop illegal immigrants from coming in. Across the country, Americans are trying to reconcile these contrasting images. And in Washington, the debate over immigration reform has reached a time of decision. Tonight, I will make it clear where I stand, and where I want to lead our country on this vital issue.

We must begin by recognizing the problems with our immigration system. For decades, the United States has not been in complete control of its borders. As a result, many who want to work in our economy have been able to sneak across our border, and millions have stayed.

Once here, illegal immigrants live in the shadows of our society. Many use forged documents to get jobs, and that makes it difficult for employers to verify that the workers they hire are legal. Illegal immigration puts pressure on public schools and hospitals, it strains state and local budgets, and brings crime to our communities. These are real problems. Yet we must remember that the vast majority of illegal immigrants are decent people who work hard, support their families, practice their faith, and lead responsible lives. They are a part of American life, but they are beyond the reach and protection of American law.

We're a nation of laws, and we must enforce our laws. We're also a nation of immigrants, and we must uphold that tradition, which has strengthened our country in so many ways. These are not contradictory goals. America can be a lawful society and a welcoming society at the same time. We will fix the problems created by illegal immigration, and we will deliver a system that is secure, orderly, and fair. So I support comprehensive immigration reform that will accomplish five clear objectives.

First, the United States must secure its borders. This is a basic responsibility of a sovereign nation. It is also an urgent requirement of our national security. Our objective is straightforward: The border should be open to trade and lawful immigration, and shut to illegal immigrants, as well as criminals, drug dealers, and terrorists.

I was a governor of a state that has a 1,200-mile border with Mexico. So I know how difficult it is to enforce the border, and how important it is. Since I became President, we've increased funding for border security by 66 percent, and expanded the Border Patrol from about 9,000 to 12,000 agents. The men and women of our Border Patrol are doing a fine job in difficult circumstances, and over the past five years, they have apprehended and sent home about six million people entering America illegally.

Despite this progress, we do not yet have full control of the border, and I am determined to change that. Tonight I'm calling on Congress to provide funding for dramatic improvements in manpower and technology at the border. By the end of 2008, we'll increase the number of Border Patrol officers by an additional 6,000. When these new agents are deployed, we'll have more than doubled the size of the Border Patrol during my presidency.

At the same time, we're launching the most technologically advanced border security initiative in American history. We will construct high-tech fences in urban corridors, and build new patrol roads and barriers in rural areas. We'll employ motion sensors, infrared cameras, and unmanned aerial vehicles to prevent illegal crossings. America has the best technology in the world, and we will ensure that the Border Patrol has the technology they need to do their job and secure our border.

Training thousands of new Border Patrol agents and bringing the most advanced technology to the border will take time. Yet the need to secure our border is urgent. So I'm announcing several immediate steps to strengthen border enforcement during this period of transition:

One way to help during this transition is to use the National Guard. So, in coordination with governors, up to 6,000 Guard members will be deployed to our southern border. The Border Patrol will remain in the lead. The Guard will assist the Border Patrol by operating surveillance systems, analyzing intelligence, installing fences and vehicle barriers, building patrol roads, and providing training. Guard units will not be involved in direct law enforcement activities -- that duty will be done by the Border Patrol. This initial commitment of Guard members would last for a period of one year. After that, the number of Guard forces will be reduced as new Border Patrol agents and new technologies come online. It is important for Americans to know that we have enough Guard forces to win the war on terror, to respond to natural disasters, and to help secure our border.

The United States is not going to militarize the southern border. Mexico is our neighbor, and our friend. We will continue to work cooperatively to improve security on both sides of the border, to confront common problems like drug trafficking and crime, and to reduce illegal immigration.

Another way to help during this period of transition is through state and local law enforcement in our border communities. So we'll increase federal funding for state and local authorities assisting the Border Patrol on targeted enforcement missions. We will give state and local authorities the specialized training they need to help federal officers apprehend and detain illegal immigrants. State and local law enforcement officials are an important part of our border security and they need to be a part of our strategy to secure our borders.

The steps I've outlined will improve our ability to catch people entering our country illegally. At the same time, we must ensure that every illegal immigrant we catch crossing our southern border is returned home. More than 85 percent of the illegal immigrants we catch crossing the southern border are Mexicans, and most are sent back home within 24 hours. But when we catch illegal immigrants from other country [sic] it is not as easy to send them home. For many years, the government did not have enough space in our detention facilities to hold them while the legal process unfolded. So most were released back into our society and asked to return for a court date. When the date arrived, the vast majority did not show up. This practice, called "catch and release," is unacceptable, and we will end it.

We're taking several important steps to meet this goal. We've expanded the number of beds in our detention facilities, and we will continue to add more. We've expedited the legal process to cut the average deportation time. And we're making it clear to foreign governments that they must accept back their citizens who violate our immigration laws. As a result of these actions, we've ended "catch and release" for illegal immigrants from some countries. And I will ask Congress for additional funding and legal authority, so we can end "catch and release" at the southern border once and for all. When people know that they'll be caught and sent home if they enter our country illegally, they will be less likely to try to sneak in.

Second, to secure our border, we must create a temporary worker program. The reality is that there are many people on the other side of our border who will do anything to come to America to work and build a better life. They walk across miles of desert in the summer heat, or hide in the back of 18-wheelers to reach our country. This creates enormous pressure on our border that walls and patrols alone will not stop. To secure the border effectively, we must reduce the numbers of people trying to sneak across.

Therefore, I support a temporary worker program that would create a legal path for foreign workers to enter our country in an orderly way, for a limited period of time. This program would match willing foreign workers with willing American employers for jobs Americans are not doing. Every worker who applies for the program would be required to pass criminal background checks. And temporary workers must return to their home country at the conclusion of their stay.

A temporary worker program would meet the needs of our economy, and it would give honest immigrants a way to provide for their families while respecting the law. A temporary worker program would reduce the appeal of human smugglers, and make it less likely that people would risk their lives to cross the border. It would ease the financial burden on state and local governments, by replacing illegal workers with lawful taxpayers. And above all, a temporary worker program would add to our security by making certain we know who is in our country and why they are here.

Third, we need to hold employers to account for the workers they hire. It is against the law to hire someone who is in this country illegally. Yet businesses often cannot verify the legal status of their employees because of the widespread problem of document fraud. Therefore, comprehensive immigration reform must include a better system for verifying documents and work eligibility. A key part of that system should be a new identification card for every legal foreign worker. This card should use biometric technology, such as digital fingerprints, to make it tamper-proof. A tamper-proof card would help us enforce the law, and leave employers with no excuse for violating it. And by making it harder for illegal immigrants to find work in our country, we would discourage people from crossing the border illegally in the first place.

Fourth, we must face the reality that millions of illegal immigrants are here already. They should not be given an automatic path to citizenship. This is amnesty, and I oppose it. Amnesty would be unfair to those who are here lawfully, and it would invite further waves of illegal immigration.

Some in this country argue that the solution is to deport every illegal immigrant, and that any proposal short of this amounts to amnesty. I disagree. It is neither wise, nor realistic to round up millions of people, many with deep roots in the United States, and send them across the border. There is a rational middle ground between granting an automatic path to citizenship for every

illegal immigrant, and a program of mass deportation. That middle ground recognizes there are differences between an illegal immigrant who crossed the border recently, and someone who has worked here for many years, and has a home, a family, and an otherwise clean record.

I believe that illegal immigrants who have roots in our country and want to stay should have to pay a meaningful penalty for breaking the law, to pay their taxes, to learn English, and to work in a job for a number of years. People who meet these conditions should be able to apply for citizenship, but approval would not be automatic, and they will have to wait in line behind those who played by the rules and followed the law. What I've just described is not amnesty, it is a way for those who have broken the law to pay their debt to society, and demonstrate the character that makes a good citizen.

Fifth, we must honor the great American tradition of the melting pot, which has made us one nation out of many peoples. The success of our country depends upon helping newcomers assimilate into our society, and embrace our common identity as Americans. Americans are bound together by our shared ideals, an appreciation of our history, respect for the flag we fly, and an ability to speak and write the English language. English is also the key to unlocking the opportunity of America. English allows newcomers to go from picking crops to opening a grocery, from cleaning offices to running offices, from a life of low-paying jobs to a diploma, a career, and a home of their own. When immigrants assimilate and advance in our society, they realize their dreams, they renew our spirit, and they add to the unity of America.

Tonight, I want to speak directly to members of the House and the Senate: An immigration reform bill needs to be comprehensive, because all elements of this problem must be addressed together, or none of them will be solved at all. The House has passed an immigration bill. The Senate should act by the end of this month so we can work out the differences between the two bills, and Congress can pass a comprehensive bill for me to sign into law.

America needs to conduct this debate on immigration in a reasoned and respectful tone. Feelings run deep on this issue, and as we work it out, all of us need to keep some things in mind. We cannot build a unified country by inciting people to anger, or playing on anyone's fears, or exploiting the issue of immigration for political gain. We must always remember that real lives will be affected by our debates and decisions, and that every human being has dignity and value no matter what their citizenship papers say.

I know many of you listening tonight have a parent or a grandparent who came here from another country with dreams of a better life. You know what freedom meant to them, and you know that America is a more hopeful country because of their hard work and sacrifice. As President, I've had the opportunity to meet people of many backgrounds, and hear what America means to them. On a visit to Bethesda Naval Hospital, Laura and I met a wounded Marine named Guadalupe Denogean. Master Gunnery Sergeant Denogean came to the United States from Mexico when he was a boy. He spent his summers picking crops with his family, and then he volunteered for the United States Marine Corps as soon as he was able. During the liberation of Iraq, Master Gunnery Sergeant Denogean was seriously injured. And when asked if he had any requests, he made two: a promotion for the corporal who helped rescue him, and the chance to become an American citizen. And when this brave Marine raised his right hand, and swore an oath to become a citizen of the country he had defended for more than 26 years, I was honored to stand at his side.

We will always be proud to welcome people like Guadalupe Denogean as fellow Americans. Our new immigrants are just what they've always been -- people willing to risk everything for the dream of freedom. And America remains what she has always been: the great hope on the horizon, an open door to the future, a blessed and promised land. We honor the heritage of all who come here, no matter where they come from, because we trust in our country's genius for making us all Americans -- one nation under God.

Thank you, and good night.

###

Fact Sheet: Comprehensive Immigration Reform

 President Bush Addresses the Nation on Immigration Reform

 In Focus: Immigration

Tonight, President Bush Discussed His Vision For Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

The five clear objectives of comprehensive immigration reform are securing our borders, creating a temporary worker program, making it easier for employers to verify employment eligibility and continuing to hold them to account for the legal status of workers they hire, dealing with the millions of illegal immigrants who are already here, and honoring the great American tradition of the melting pot.

The President Believes America Can Be A Lawful Society And A Welcoming Society At The Same Time. We will fix the problem of illegal immigration, and we will deliver a system that is secure, orderly, and fair.

1. The United States Must Secure Its Borders

Securing Our Borders Is The Basic Responsibility Of A Sovereign Nation And An Urgent Requirement Of Our National Security. President Bush's proposals to better secure our borders include increasing the number of Border Patrol agents, using enhanced border security technology, ending the practice of "catch and release" along the southern border, eliminating bureaucratic obstacles to returning illegal immigrants to their home countries, and working with our Nation's Governors to send National Guard members to the border for temporary assignment to assist the Border Patrol during the transition as new Border Patrol agents are added and new technologies come online.

Since President Bush Took Office, We Have Increased Funding For Border Security By 66 Percent And Expanded The Border Patrol From About 9,000 To 12,000 Agents. Over the past five years, we have apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering America illegally.

The President's Secure Border Initiative (SBI) Is The Most Technologically Advanced Border Enforcement Initiative In American History. This year, we will begin a comprehensive program to construct high-tech fences in urban corridors and build new patrol roads and barriers in rural areas. We will employ motion sensors, infrared cameras, and unmanned aerial vehicles to detect and prevent illegal crossings. We will better integrate our homeland security forces to dramatically improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our border security efforts.

President Bush Is Asking Congress For \$327 Million To Help End The Policy Of "Catch And Release." More than 85 percent of the illegal immigrants apprehended at the southern border are from Mexico, and most are returned within 24 hours. For many years, government detention facilities did not have enough beds for many non-Mexican illegal immigrants caught at the border. As a result, most were released back into society. They were each assigned a court date, but the vast majority did not show up.

- **The President's FY06 Budget Funds 20,800 Beds For Detention Facilities.** The President is asking Congress to provide money to increase the number of beds in

detention facilities by 4,000 beds and to increase efficiency in the detention and removal system. The President's FY07 budget proposes increasing the number of beds in detention facilities to 27,500 by the end of FY07. The Administration has expanded the use of "expedited removal," which allows us to send non-Mexican illegal immigrants home more quickly. We are also continuing to make it clear to foreign governments that they must accept back their citizens who violate our immigration laws.

- **The President Is Eliminating Bureaucratic Obstacles So That We Can Return More Non-Mexican Illegal Aliens In Shorter Periods Of Time Than Ever Before.** We have expedited the legal process to cut the average deportation time. We have ended "catch and release" for illegal immigrants from Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua caught crossing our southern border. The Administration will work with Congress to close loopholes making it difficult to process illegal immigrants from certain countries and will continue pressing foreign governments who are reluctant to take back their citizens who violate our immigration laws.
- **The President Is Working With Congress To Eliminate Rules Requiring The Federal Government To Release Illegal Immigrants If Their Home Countries Do Not Take Them Back In A Set Period Of Time.** These rules have forced the government to release even violent criminals. The President is also working with Congress to address the cycle of endless litigation that clogs immigration courts, rewards illegal behavior, and delays justice for immigrants with legitimate claims.
- **The Administration Is Working To Expand "Operation Streamline."** Through "Operation Streamline," the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Justice (DOJ), and numerous local law enforcement organizations are working to expedite prosecution of aliens for illegal entry in conjunction with removal proceedings.

We Are Working Closely With State And Local Law Enforcement To Stop Illegal Immigration.

- **The Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC) Is Enabling DHS To Share Critical Law Enforcement Information - Such As Immigration Status And Identity Information - With State And Local Law Enforcement Officials.** Responses to requests for information sent to the LESC are usually answered within an hour. In FY 2004, the LESC provided immigration-related information requested by Federal, State, and local law enforcement officials on over 668,000 occasions. The LESC regularly responds to over 60,000 queries per month. The LESC also provides training to officers in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nevada, New York, and Texas.
- **DHS Is Continuing Its Program, In Conjunction With State And Local Law Enforcement Agencies, To Identify Illegal Aliens Who Are Incarcerated In Non-Federal Jails.** Under this program, when a criminal alien is booked into a State, county, or local jail, an electronic query is automatically sent to DHS to verify the alien's immigration status. Certain jails in Arizona, California, Florida, and Texas are using this program.

The United States And Mexico Are Engaging In Renewed Discussions On Collaborative Border Security And Safety Initiatives. The United States and Mexico have a shared interest in addressing violence against law enforcement personnel and innocent people and increased lawlessness that is occurring in some border areas.

- **U.S.-Mexico Action Plan To Combat Border Violence:** On March 3, 2006, in accordance with the Security and Prosperity Partnership, Mexico and the United States signed an Action Plan to combat border violence and improve public safety. This agreement strengthens procedures to enhance cooperation on both sides of the border to respond to scenarios ranging from accidental crossings to incidents of violence, or other situations that present risks to those who live, work, or travel at our common border. Both governments endorsed a multi-step plan for bi-national coordination during emergency situations and committed to ensure immediate communication and information sharing during any such situations that may have cross-border implications. The Action Plan also sets forth the groundwork for ensuring coordinated investigations and detentions of persons believed to be involved in violent activity along the border.
- **We Are Working With The Mexican Government On Interior Repatriation - Returning Illegal Immigrants To The Towns They Came From In Mexico.** Over the past two years, nearly 35,000 illegal immigrants were returned to Mexico through interior repatriation to decrease their likelihood of trying to cross again.

President Bush Is Calling On Congress To Provide Funding For Improvements In Manpower And Technology And Better Collaboration With State And Local Law Enforcement Officials.

- **We Will Increase The Number Of Border Patrol Agents By 6,000 By The End Of 2008 - Doubling The Size Of The Border Patrol During The President's Time In Office.** So far, President Bush has increased the number of Border Patrol agents from about 9,000 to about 12,000. More agents mean more area will be covered and more illegal cross-border traffic will be interdicted. Crime will decrease around the border as criminal enterprises are dismantled and human and narcotic smuggling corridors are disrupted.

We Will Continue Expanding The Federal Government's Partnership With Border Counties And Targeted States. Targeted training and grant programs like the 287(g) program and Operation Stonegarden allow State and local law enforcement to assist the Border Patrol in helping the Federal government quickly expand border security efforts on a temporary basis.

- **Operation Stonegarden Provides Grants For Overtime And Travel Expenses, Enabling Local, State And Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies To Increase Manpower Required For Area-Specific Operations.** These agencies work in direct coordination with the U.S. Border Patrol. During these joint operations, there is an increased area of coverage, which increases apprehension of illegal cross-border traffic and deters local crime.
- **Section 287(g) Of The Immigration And Nationality Act Authorizes DHS To Train State And Local Law Enforcement Officials In Immigration Enforcement So They**

Can Identify And Process Incarcerated Aliens. DHS is working with State and local law enforcement across the Nation to ensure illegal aliens are removed from the United States. 287(g) programs have already been established in Alabama, Florida, Arizona, North Carolina, and California. DHS will work with its State and local partners to expand these programs to increase targeted enforcement and will be requesting \$50 million dollars for this effort along the southern border.

- **These Additional Resources Will Enhance Partnerships Between ICE And State and Local Law Enforcement As Newly Trained and Certified Officers Join DHS Task Forces, Including Border Enforcement And Security Task Forces, Document And Benefit Fraud Task Forces, And Human Trafficking Task Forces.** The expanded participation will increase the apprehension, prosecution, and removal of criminal aliens and alien smuggling rings at the southern border and throughout the country.
- **ICE Is Projecting To Train Approximately 250 To 500 State And Local Law Enforcement Officers Under The 287(g) Delegation Authority Program.** Focused primarily on the southern border states, expansion of the 287(g) delegation of authority in a managed and focused approach will significantly enhance ICE's capabilities.

To Help During This Period Of Transition And In Coordination With Governors, Up To 6,000 National Guard Members Will Be Sent To Our Southern Border. The Department of Homeland Security will remain in the lead. National Guard units will assist the Border Patrol by operating surveillance systems, analyzing intelligence, installing fences and vehicle barriers, building patrol roads, and providing training. National Guard units deployed to our border will not be involved in direct law enforcement activities - that duty will be done by the Border Patrol.

- **This Initial Commitment Of Guard Members Would Last For One Year.** After that, the number of National Guard members will be reduced as new Border Patrol agents are added and new technologies come online. At any one time, these 6,000 Guard members account for less than 2 percent of the total National Guard force of more than 440,000. Guard members will be deployed in two- to three-week rotations to meet this 6,000 person level. We have enough National Guard members to deploy to our border, while continuing to respond to natural disasters and fight and win the War on Terror.
- **The National Guard's Primary Role Will Be Support For DHS - As Is Currently Provided On A More Limited Basis.** National Guard units will not be involved in the apprehension or detention of illegal immigrants, perform detention operations, take or maintain custody of illegal aliens, or directly perform any law enforcement activities. Apprehensions and detention operations will be conducted by the Border Patrol.
- **The President Is Committed To Working With Our Nation's Governors.** Military personnel will be employed consistent with applicable Federal, state, and local law. The National Guard units from the Southwest Border (SWB) States will be under the command and control of their respective State Governors and Adjutants General. National Guard units from other States will deploy to the SWB States, and through an agreement between Governors of providing States and receiving States, will be under the

command and control of the Governors and Adjutants General of the receiving States. The National Guard Bureau will serve as the coordinating authority to deploy National Guard units from across the country to perform the border security mission in support of DHS. The SWB States will establish a National Guard Joint Task Force in each State to serve as the command and control element for the border security mission. These Joint Task Forces will provide the necessary logistical and administrative support for mobilized forces. These Joint Task Forces will establish coordinating relationships with the each other and DHS to ensure unity of effort and information sharing.

- **The United States Is Not Going To Militarize The Southern Border.** Mexico is our neighbor and friend. We will continue to work cooperatively to improve security on both sides of the border, confront common problems like drug trafficking and crime, and reduce illegal immigration.
- **National Guard Support Will Enable Us To Move More Than 500 Border Patrol Agents From Jobs In The Back Office To The Front Lines.** This will free well-trained border patrol agents now performing clerical, transportation, and logistics jobs and return them to helping detect and apprehend illegal aliens. These veteran agents will not have to undergo additional training to be effective in their areas of operation.

The United States, Canada And Mexico Have A Common Border Security Workplan Under The Security Pillar Of The Security And Prosperity Partnership (SPP) Of North America. When the three leaders met in Cancun, Mexico, in March 2006, they committed to working together on a "North American Smart, Secure Borders Plan," which includes close coordination on screening of goods and people, collaboration and prioritization of border infrastructure and technology investment, and concerted law enforcement cooperation to respond to criminal or terrorist threats.

- **The United States And Canada Cooperate Extensively On A Range Of Border Security And Counterterrorism Initiatives.** Since 2001, Canada has demonstrated its commitment to increased internal security by investing billions of dollars on security enhancements to increase coordination among agencies, enhance border, airport, and maritime security, improve screening of immigrants and refugee claimants, and improve critical infrastructure protection. Together, the United States and Canada have established 15 Integrated Border Enforcement Teams combining U.S. and Canadian law enforcement agencies in a unified effort along the border.

2. To Secure Our Border, We Must Create A Temporary Worker Program

President Bush Supports A Temporary Worker Program That Would Create A Legal Path For Foreign Workers To Enter Our Country In An Orderly Way, For A Limited Period Of Time. This program would match willing foreign workers with willing American employers for jobs Americans are not doing. Every worker who applies for the program would be required to pass criminal background checks, and temporary workers must return to their home country at the conclusion of their authorized stay.

- **A Temporary Worker Program Would Meet The Needs Of Our Economy, Ease The Financial Burden On State And Local Governments, And - Most Importantly - Add**

To Our Security. A temporary worker program would give honest immigrants a way to provide for their families while respecting the law, replace illegal workers with lawful taxpayers, and enable us to make certain we know who is in our country and why they are here.

3. We Need To Hold Employers To Account For The Workers They Hire

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Include The Creation Of A New Identification Card For Every Legal Foreign Worker So Businesses Can Verify The Legal Status Of Their Employees. This card should use biometric technology to make it tamper-proof. A tamper-proof card would help us enforce the law - and leave employers with no excuse for violating it. We will also work with Congress to expand "basic pilot" - an electronic employment verification system - and mandate that all employers use this system to quickly and accurately confirm work eligibility for all prospective employees. By making it harder for illegal immigrants to find work in our country, we would discourage people from crossing the border illegally in the first place.

4. We Must Deal With The Millions Of Illegal Immigrants Who Are Already Here

Illegal Immigrants Should Not Be Given Amnesty. President Bush opposes amnesty and believes illegal immigrants should not be given an automatic path to citizenship because it would be unfair to those who are here lawfully and would invite further waves of illegal immigration. The President supports increasing the annual number of green cards that can lead to citizenship, but for the sake of justice and security, the President is firmly opposed to amnesty.

President Bush Believes That Deporting Every Illegal Immigrant Is Neither Wise Nor Realistic. There is a rational middle ground between granting an automatic path to citizenship for every illegal immigrant and a program of mass deportation.

President Bush Believes Illegal Immigrants Who Have Roots in America And Who Want To Stay Should Have To Pay A Meaningful Penalty For Breaking The Law, Pay Their Taxes, Learn English, And Work In A Job For A Number Of Years. The President also believes that there are differences between an illegal immigrant who crossed the border recently - and someone who has worked here for many years, and has a home, a family, and an otherwise clean record. Those who meet our conditions should be able to apply for citizenship - but approval will not be automatic, and they will have to wait in line behind those who played by the rules and followed the law.

5. We Must Honor The Great American Tradition Of The Melting Pot

The Success Of Our Country Depends Upon Helping Newcomers Assimilate Into Our Society And Embracing Our Common Identity As Americans. Americans are bound together by our shared ideals, an appreciation of our history, respect for the flag we fly, and an ability to speak and write the English language.

- **English Is The Key To Unlocking The Opportunity Of America.** English allows newcomers to go from picking crops to opening a grocery, from cleaning offices to running offices, from a life of low-paying jobs to a diploma, a career, and a home of their

own. When immigrants assimilate and advance in our society, they realize their dreams, they renew our spirit, and they add to the unity of America.

The House And Senate Must Pass A Comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill

All Elements Of This Problem Must Be Addressed Together - Or None Of Them Will Be Solved At All. The House has passed an immigration bill. The Senate should act by the end of this month - so that the House and Senate can work out their differences and send the President a comprehensive bill to sign.

America Needs To Conduct This Debate In A Reasoned And Respectful Tone. Feelings run deep on the matter of immigration - and as we work out this issue, all of us need to keep some things in mind. We cannot build a unified country by inciting people to anger, or playing on anyone's fears, or exploiting the issue of immigration for political gain. We must always remember that real lives will be affected by our debates and decisions, and that every human being has dignity and value no matter what their citizenship papers say.

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Fact Sheet: Overview: Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Tonight, President Bush Discussed His Vision For Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

The five clear objectives of comprehensive immigration reform are securing our borders, creating a temporary worker program, making it easier for employers to verify employment eligibility and continuing to hold them to account for the legal status of workers they hire, dealing with the millions of illegal immigrants who are already here, and honoring the great American tradition of the melting pot.

- **The President Believes America Can Be A Lawful Society And A Welcoming Society At The Same Time.** We will fix the problem of illegal immigration, and we will deliver a system that is secure, orderly, and fair.

1. The United States Must Secure Its Borders

Securing Our Borders Is The Basic Responsibility Of A Sovereign Nation And An Urgent Requirement Of Our National Security. President Bush's proposals to better secure our borders include increasing the number of Border Patrol agents, ending the practice of "catch and release" along the southern border, eliminating bureaucratic obstacles to returning illegal immigrants to their home countries, and sending National Guard members to the border for temporary assignment to assist the Border Patrol during the transition as new Border Patrol agents are added and new technology comes online.

Since President Bush Took Office, We Have Increased Funding For Border Security By 66 Percent And Expanded The Border Patrol From About 9,000 To 12,000 Agents. Over the past five years, we have apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering America illegally.

By The End Of 2008, We Will Have Increased The Number Of Border Patrol Officers By An Additional 6,000. When these new agents are deployed, we will have more than doubled the size of the Border Patrol during the President's Administration.

We Launched The Secure Border Initiative, The Most Technologically Advanced Border Enforcement Initiative In American History. We will construct high-tech fences in urban corridors and build new patrol roads and barriers in rural areas. We will employ motion sensors, infrared cameras, and unmanned aerial vehicles to detect and respond to illegal crossings.

The President's Plan To Increase Border Security Will Take Time To Fully Implement, So The President Is Announcing Several Immediate Steps To Strengthen Border Enforcement During This Transition:

- **In Coordination With Governors, Up To 6,000 National Guard Members Will Be Sent To Our Southern Border.** The Department of Homeland Security, and specifically the Border Patrol, will remain in the lead. The Guard, which will be deployed in shifts, will assist the Border Patrol by operating surveillance systems, analyzing intelligence, installing fences and vehicle barriers, building patrol roads, and providing training. Guard units will not be involved in direct law enforcement activities -- that duty will be done by the Border Patrol.

- **This Initial Commitment Of Guard Members Would Last For One Year.**
After that, the number of Guard forces will be reduced as new Border Patrol agents are added and new technologies come online. These 6,000 troops account for less than 2 percent of the total National Guard force of more than 440,000. We have enough National Guard members to secure our border while continuing to respond to natural disasters and to win the War on Terror.
- **The United States Is Not Going To Militarize The Southern Border.** Mexico is our neighbor and friend. We will continue to work cooperatively to improve security on both sides of the border, confront common problems like drug trafficking and crime, and reduce illegal immigration.
- **We Will Increase Federal Funding For State And Local Authorities Assisting The Border Patrol On Targeted Enforcement Missions, And We Will Give Them The Specialized Training They Need To Help The Border Patrol And Other Federal Officers Apprehend And Detain Illegal Immigrants.**

We Will Work To Ensure That Every Illegal Immigrant We Catch Crossing Our Southern Border Is Returned Home By Ending The Practice Of "Catch And Release." For many years, the government did not have enough space in our detention facilities to hold illegal immigrants while the legal process unfolded. Most were released back into society and asked to return for a court date, but did not show up when the date arrived.

- **To End "Catch And Release," We Will Continue Expanding The Number Of Beds In Our Detention Facilities And Continue Expediting The Removal Process To Cut The Average Deportation Time.** We are making it clear to foreign governments that they must accept back their citizens who violate our immigration laws. As a result of these actions, we have ended catch and release for illegal immigrants from some countries. The President will ask Congress for additional funding and legal authority to permanently end catch and release at the southern border once and for all.

2. To Secure Our Border, We Must Create A Temporary Worker Program

President Bush Supports A Temporary Worker Program That Would Create A Legal Path For Foreign Workers To Enter Our Country In An Orderly Way, For A Limited Period Of Time. This program would match willing foreign workers with willing American employers for jobs Americans are not doing. Every worker who applies for the program would be required to pass criminal background checks, and temporary workers must return to their home country at the conclusion of their stay.

- **A Temporary Worker Program Would Meet The Needs Of Our Economy, Ease The Financial Burden On State And Local Governments, And Add To Our Security.** A temporary worker program would give honest immigrants a way to provide for their families while respecting the law, would replace illegal workers with lawful taxpayers, and would enable us to make certain we know who is in our country and why they are here.

3. We Need To Hold Employers To Account For The Workers They Hire

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Include A Tamper-Resistant Identification Card For Every Legal Foreign Worker So Businesses Can Verify The Legal Status Of Their Employees. This card should use biometric technology, such as digital fingerprints, to make it tamper-proof. This would leave employers with no excuse for violating the law, and it would help us enforce the law.

4. We Must Deal With The Millions Of Illegal Immigrants Already Here

The President Opposes Amnesty. President Bush opposes giving illegal immigrants an automatic path to citizenship because it would be unfair to those who are here lawfully, would compromise the rule of law, and would invite further waves of illegal immigration. The President supports increasing the annual number of green cards that can lead to citizenship, but for the sake of justice and security, the President is firmly opposed to amnesty.

President Bush Believes That Deporting Every Illegal Immigrant Is Neither Wise Nor Realistic. There is a rational middle ground between granting an automatic path to citizenship for every illegal immigrant and a program of mass deportation.

President Bush Believes Illegal Immigrants Who Want To Stay Should Have To Pay A Meaningful Penalty For Breaking The Law, Pay Their Taxes, Learn English, And Work In A Job For A Number Of Years. The President also believes that there are differences between an illegal immigrant who crossed the border recently and someone who has worked here for many years, and has a home, a family, and an otherwise clean record. Those who meet our conditions should be able to apply for citizenship but approval will not be automatic, and they will have to wait in line behind those who played by the rules and followed the law.

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All Elements Of This Problem Must Be Addressed Together. The House has passed an immigration bill. The Senate should act by the end of this month so that the House and Senate can work out their differences and send the President a comprehensive bill to sign.

America Needs To Conduct This Debate In A Reasoned And Respectful Tone. Feelings run deep on this issue and as we work it out, all of us need to keep some things in mind. We cannot build a unified country by inciting people to anger, or playing on anyone's fears, or exploiting the issue of immigration for political gain. We must always remember that real lives will be affected by our debates and decisions, and that every human being has dignity and value no matter what their citizenship papers say.

Press Briefing on the President's Speech on Immigration

Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building
Room 450

▣ President Bush Addresses the Nation on Immigration Reform

▣ Fact Sheet: Overview: Comprehensive Immigration Reform

▣ In Focus: Immigration

PARTICIPANTS

Tony Snow, Assistant to the President and Press Secretary

Dan Bartlett, Counselor to the President

Fran Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism

Joel Kaplan, Assistant to the President and Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy

4:24 P.M. EDT

MR. SNOW: Quick note on the ground rules. This is an on-the-record briefing, but it is embargoed until the time of the delivery of the speech.

What we're going to do is Dan is going to give you an outline about how the speech came together and what the President hopes to accomplish; why the speech is being delivered now and the path forward. Fran, of course, will give an overview of border security. Joel, then, will talk about all the comprehensive portions of comprehensive reform, and he'll walk through temporary worker program, interior enforcement and the like.

With that, I'll hand it over to Dan.

MR. BARTLETT: The President decided almost a month ago that, strategically, this was going to be an important speech for him to deliver at the right time in the debate. We've been working on the speech for a couple weeks now. I can recall talking to him and talking to the speech writers during the California trip out West, when the President was out there for that weekend, already looking at language, working on the structure of the speech and looking at different concepts.

What was really the breakthrough, as far as timing, was last week's agreement between the leadership -- the Democrat and Republican leadership in the Senate to have the debate go forward. As you know, that starts this week, so on the eve of this debate we felt it was an important time for the President to articulate to the American people where he stands on the big issues, what are some other steps we can take on the key components of the President's strategy on comprehensive immigration reform.

The speech, itself, is broken down accordingly. First will be discussion about border security, which Fran will go into more detail about. The strategy remains the same, as far as having increased manpower complemented by vast improvements in our technological capability along the border. Like I said, Fran will go into some of the details about our long-term commitment to increasing our presence on the border, and then some immediate steps we're going to take as we build up those capabilities.

Secondly is the interior enforcement. You've heard the President talk considerably about this. This is a critical component of comprehensive reform, and to have effective enforcement. Right now we're putting many businesses in an untenable position to try to be verifiers of documents that are oftentimes forged. What the President will argue tonight and call for is tamper-proof cards and other measures to make sure that we can help employers verify the status of anybody who would be serving in a temporary worker program.

Then the onus not only comes on having a tamper-proof card, but also on -- it becomes incumbent upon employers to meet their requirements on the laws of the land.

Third, the President will argue the need for a temporary worker program. He will talk about how he views this in the context of how it can help better enforce our borders, how it can help bring a more rational system in which we match willing worker with willing employer. He will talk about the benefits that will come from such a plan of having a temporary worker program going forward.

He then will turn to the issue of the current illegal immigration population in our country, the 11 million or 12 million that are here. He will strongly state that he believes that an automatic path to citizenship is amnesty and it's something that he will vigorously oppose.

But he will also talk about really forging a rational middle ground when it comes to the specifics from it being illogical to think that we could massively deport 12 million illegal immigrants at one time; that we ought to have an approach that doesn't look at this as a monolithic population, but one in which there are realities we ought to take into consideration as we forge a piece of legislation to deal with the illegal immigrants that are already here. Fourth -- that is the fourth point.

And then fifth, he will talk about assimilation and the responsibilities of every citizen of our country and those who want to be citizens of our country, and that is basically the fact that you do have to meet the requirements of a citizen. That means learning English, assimilating, be law abiding, and other aspects of what has made America unique and the fact that people from all walks of life can come together under one fabric of the United States of America and do so in a way that we've out-performed any other country in the world when it comes to assimilation. And those are important values and principles that the President will articulate.

So those are the five components of the speech that he will articulate tonight. Right now we're looking at, roughly, 17 minutes in length. It could be a little more, a little less, but right now that looks about it at the point of delivery.

With that, to talk about some of the immediate long-term measures on the border security and short-term measures, I'll give it to Fran Townsend.

MS. TOWNSEND: Thanks, Dan. I'll break this into component pieces. First I'm going to talk about the Border Patrol. The President will talk about increasing the United States Border Patrol by 6,000 by the end of calendar year '08. Let me give you a little background and then break down those numbers for you.

Since the President took office, when the Border Patrol was roughly 9,000 agents, there's been a 66 percent increase thus far to -- by the end of September 2006, to 12,300, roughly. What this

calls for is in fiscal year '07 an additional 2,500 agents; in fiscal year '08 another 3,000 agents; and then in the first quarter of fiscal year '09, which is the last part of the calendar year in '08, another 500. So that's a total increase of another 6,000 Border Patrol agents, which will basically double the size -- nearly double the size of the Border Patrol by the end of calendar year '08.

The National Guard: The President will talk about the deployment of up to 6,000 National Guardsmen to the border for a total of one year. Then over the course of the second year, there will be a scaling down of the number of National Guardsmen at the border as the Border Patrol begins to ramp up and they are able to deploy Border Patrol to the border.

Apprehensions and detention: During the course of the National Guard deployment, apprehensions and detention operations will continue to be conducted by Border Patrol. The National Guardsmen will be looked to for mission assignments, that is, mission assignments by the Department of Homeland Security to the Department of Defense in areas of their expertise. Think of things such as intelligence, surveillance and infrastructure. There will be a combination of both Guard deployments and contractors to fulfill those mission assignments, depending on the expertise that's required and available.

The National Guardsmen will be under the control of the receiving governor in the border state. That will need to be by the agreement of both the sending governor and the receiving governor, and how that -- where the people are pulled from will depend on where the expertise is and what the mission assignment -- what the mission requirement is, as determined by DHS.

The deployment of National Guardsmen will likely begin sometime in early June. The specific mission assignments the Department of Homeland Security is working on now, with their colleagues at DOD. They expect to have the first mission assignments available to DOD by Wednesday, and then DOD will be able to begin to process that and look for those most appropriate to fulfill those mission assignments.

Again, the National Guard forces will be working in coordination with Customs and Border Patrol, which will remain in the lead at the border. One of the byproducts, one of the natural consequences of the deployment of the 6,000 in the first year is -- one of the many -- is a freeing up of about 500 Border Patrol agents from what otherwise would have been administrative or away from the front line jobs, and they will be able to be redeployed to front line positions.

The National Guard Bureau and the state adjutants general will have to closely coordinate with Customs and Border Patrol, just as we've done -- just as they've done over the years in the counter narcotics mission.

Catch and release: The President tonight will be asking Congress for \$327 million to help end the policy that's come to be known as catch and release. Most illegal immigrants apprehended at the border are from Mexico and can be returned within 24 hours. This will require additional -- ending of catch and release will require not only additional detention space, but will also require us working with Congress to ensure the appropriate legal authorities.

The President's fiscal year '06 budget funds an additional 1,900 beds for detention facilities in the United States. The supplemental budget request will ask for approximately 4,000 additional beds, which would be a 12 percent increase. The President's fiscal year '07 budget proposes increasing the number of detention beds in facilities by another 32 percent.

Now let me just break down bed numbers for you, because that's confusing enough for me. In fiscal year '05, there were 18,500 beds. Fiscal year '06 adds 2,300, which gives you, by the end of May '06, 20,800. Supplemental will propose 4,000 additional beds, which gives you by the end of fiscal year '06, 24,800. Fiscal year '07 requests an additional 2,700, which means by the end of fiscal year '07, there will be a total of 27,500 beds.

Last year, it took an average of 66 days to process non-Mexican illegal immigrants. The process is a result of the increased use of expedited removal. That process is now only taking 21 days.

Okay, the last segment of this. The President will speak about increasing partnership cooperation and leveraging state and local resources. That falls into two categories. First, what we refer to as 287G -- 287G of the Immigration and Nationality Act authorizes DHS to train state and local law enforcement officials in immigration enforcement so they can identify, process and begin removal proceedings for incarcerated aliens; 287G programs have already been established in Alabama, Florida, Arizona, North Carolina, and California. The 287G program is roughly now about a \$5.5 million program. The President will be requesting to raise this to a \$50-million annual effort.

There will also be -- the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency will establish task forces to participate in the border enforcement and security task forces, document and benefit fraud task forces, and human trafficking task forces. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is projecting to train approximately 1,500 additional state and local law enforcement officers, using this 287G delegation of authority program.

Stonegarden is the other piece to this leverage in state and local capabilities. On January of 2006, DHS announced the expansion of Operation Stonegarden to give states additional flexibility to strengthen border security, working in coordination with DHS. Approximately \$20 million is available for Operation Stonegarden in fiscal year 2006, and we will be seeking \$15 million in supplemental funds to expand the Operation Stonegarden as a result of the President's speech.

Operation Stonegarden provides grants for overtime and travel expenses, allowing local, state and tribal law enforcement agencies to increase manpower required for area-specific operations. Again, this would be state and local law enforcement acting in coordination and consultation with Customs and Border Patrol, not independently.

And with that, I'll turn it over to --

MR. BARTLETT: Just to put one point -- to put some of this substance in the context of the speech. The way the President will depict this in the speech is obviously talk about the record of accomplishment of what we have so far: the dramatic increase, 66 percent increase in funding for Border Patrol and border security efforts; the fact that when we increase by an additional 6,000 -- as he proposes tonight -- will have more than doubled the number of agents during his presidency.

But he'll acknowledge in this speech that that hasn't been enough to secure the borders and that these additional steps must be taken. And it's during this interim period of the 6,000 being trained that we're going to use the immediate measures of the Guard and these two provisions of tapping into state and local resources through both the 287G, as well as the Stonegarden operations that have been announced.

So that's how he'll depict it, is the long-term commitment and sustained commitment of border security will be the training up of these additional 6,000 Border agents, and then these two other -- these other provisions are kind of the immediate steps to fill the transition until we get to that strength.

MS. TOWNSEND: Yes, it should be clear that this is not intended as a militarization of the border. We work cooperatively with Mexico; the Department of Homeland Security, in particular, works very well with Mexican enforcement officials. This is intended for us to take additional measures to strengthen our border enforcement effort while we continue to ramp up, frankly, at an unprecedented level the through-put in training Customs and Border Patrol agents.

MR. KAPLAN: The President will go into the elements of the border security portion of a comprehensive immigration proposal at the outset, but he'll also make clear that you have to address all of the aspects of the immigration problem in order to be effective. So after he talks about the steps we're taking on border security, he will move into talking about the second objective, which is to create a temporary worker program. This is particularly important because you need a temporary worker program as an essential steam valve that will relieve pressure on the borders.

America is a rich country and our neighbors are not as well-off, and you've got a large supply of labor that is willing to take extraordinary risks today to come into this country and that puts tremendous pressure on the borders. So a temporary worker program that allows -- that matches willing foreign workers with willing employers for jobs that Americans are not doing is an essential portion of the plan that works in a mutually reinforcing way with the security measures that Fran talked about.

In the temporary worker program, the President will also make clear it is intended to be a temporary worker program. At the end of -- at the conclusion of their stay in this country, the temporary worker programs who come in through the program must return home.

The next element of the comprehensive plan that the President will talk about is the need to hold employers to account for the workers that they hire. Dan talked about the need for a tamper-proof biometric identity card for every legal foreign worker. And the President will also talk about the need to improve the efforts for employers to verify eligibility of workers. So we'll be expanding -- comprehensive immigration reform will expand on the basic pilot in place now to make sure that employers have an efficient way of verifying that the workers that they hire are here as part of the temporary worker program and are not here illegally.

Once we have these systems in place, it will remove an excuse from workers for -- excuse me, an excuse from employers for violating the law. And that's an important part of making sure that we have an effective, comprehensive system in place.

The next element the President will talk about, as Dan mentioned, is facing the reality of the millions of illegal immigrants who are already here in this country. There are some who argue that anything short of a mass deportation of these illegal immigrants is amnesty. The President does not believe that.

At the same time, he does not believe that every illegal immigrant here ought to have an automatic path to citizenship. As Dan mentioned, he believes there's a rational middle ground.

That rational middle ground recognizes that there are differences between someone -- an illegal immigrant who showed up very recently, and someone who's been here a long time, has put down roots, has a family, has a job. He also believes that it's important to recognize -- that it's important to make sure that those who apply for citizenship in this country pay a meaningful penalty before they do so, that they pay their taxes, that they learn English, and demonstrate good character and good citizenship.

The last issue, which relates to that good citizenship -- or the character to be a good citizen relates to making sure that our immigration system reflects the important principles of assimilation that have made this country great; that he wants to make sure that our immigration system encourages the principles of a melting pot; that everybody who comes to this country wants to become a fully functioning part of our society, learns English, and supports the principles that have made this country great.

MR. BARTLETT: Do you want to touch generally on the budget process?

MR. KAPLAN: Dan asked if I would touch on the budget process -- he's trying to drag me back into my old job at OMB -- which I'll be happy to do.

There's a supplemental bill, as most of you know, pending in the Congress. The Senate version of the supplemental included \$1.9 billion for border security. The border security measures that Fran laid out we expect to work with the Congress to try to direct that \$1.9 billion into these measures, which we think are the most effective measures that can be taken in the near-term to dramatically increase our border security.

So we'll be working with the appropriators, the leadership in Congress over the next couple weeks to try to make sure that that supplemental bill, within the top line, \$92.2 billion, plus pandemic funding, within that top line accommodates the necessary measures that Fran laid out for border security.

MR. SNOW: Okay, let me make a couple of quick comments about politics, and then we'll do questions, because there's a lot of speculation that the President is doing this simply to mollify the Republican base.

This is an act of leadership. The fact is, the President is going to give a speech that is based on what he thinks is important, and these are his real passions. If he wanted simply to give a speech to mollify any given voting block, it would be a much different kind of speech. Instead what he's -- you've heard him talk about this in the past. He has very strong passions about it.

As far as politics, as I said in the gaggle this morning, good policy is good politics. Leadership is also good politics. When somebody stands up and says, this is what I believe; I'm going to enter the debate now, the debate on which both parties are divided internally, on which both parties have big differences, on which passions run very high, sometimes it might be seen as politically safe to stand aside and let the tempest go by. But instead, what the President has said is, no, I want to have -- I want to tell the American people where I stand on this debate at precisely the moment where it can have an impact. And that is the impact as the Senate gets ready to debate and pass an immigration measure that will move on to conference.

So for those -- this is not a simple political play. Immigration is a whole complex of issues. One other thing is that the President has also rejected the notion, well, do one thing first and then we'll do other things later, because he understands that if you don't do it all at once things fall apart.

Immigration is not one issue, it is a series of issues. It has issues of national security, of the economy, and also what kind of country we are, what we say to people who want to share in the American Dream. The President addresses all of those parts knowing that if you do one, the temptation is going to be to sweep the others under the rug and leave them untouched for one, two, five, 10 years and let pressures build again. As tough as this is, this is a way of addressing all of the points not only of conflict, but also opportunity when it comes to immigration. And that's the reason he's delivering the speech.

Now questions.

Q I have a question about the politics, Tony. If you're talking about leadership, the reality is that this President campaigned on this issue in 2000, talking about a temporary guest worker program. And then fast-forward to tonight, he is, indeed, mollifying conservatives by talking about sending National Guard troops down to the border. That's a huge tactical change, is it not? And does it not reflect the fact that the politics has turned around on this for him?

MR. SNOW: As I said this morning, David -- I know you weren't there, but I think you've read the gaggle notes -- what the President is doing -- one of the things he's done is he listened to people on the issue. It is an issue of enormous passion, as perhaps you've noticed. We have seen this not only with large demonstrations in the streets, we've also seen it with Minutemen. This is an issue that has also changed since the year 2000.

What was for many people sort of a passing concern in 2000 is now the number one concern in the year 2006. It has become a matter of considerable urgency for a lot of people. It is also a time -- in the year 2000, or 2001, upon taking office -- I don't know whether the President could have gotten Congress to act then or not. I just don't know. But it is pretty clear that not only the passions, but the sense of urgency, are considerably different than they were back then, and therefore, the opportunity to do things in a comprehensive manner is far greater than it was then.

MR. BARTLETT: I'd also say, at that time, at looking at his background and history on this issue, when he was governor of Texas and had served in the governor's office with him at the time, there was an emphasis and a priority of this President on border security. I remember traveling with him to El Paso, Texas and witnessing what was called then Operation Hold the Line.

The fact of the matter -- what he'll talk about is a record of accomplishment. We've had a 66 percent increase on border security funding during the course of his tenure. Now that reflects a President who understands that border security is a priority, as well. Obviously, the temporary worker program has always gotten the most attention because it has the controversy and politics around it. But border security has been something that he's been committed to. These additional steps are ones in which, as Tony described, are ones that are based on where we are in the debate and listening to people who feel very passionate and very sincere feelings on border security.

Q Can you break out the numbers with more specificity beyond the \$1.9 billion in the Senate sup? Give us -- sort of compartmentalize it, how it's going to break out dollar-wise.

Q And does the Guard come out of that -- the cost come out of that \$1.9 billion, for example?

MR. BARTLETT: Yes.

Q It goes to the states, to pay the Guard?

MS. TOWNSEND: By and large, it's our -- well, many of the details of the deployment will have to be worked out based on mission assignments. It's our intention that many of the deployments will be able to be done inside the two or three weeks of the required annual training. And so that should not assume additional costs and should be able to be paid for inside the \$1.9 billion.

Do you have a question.

Q A question related to that. Did the 6,000 number come first? Because it sounds like the mission assignments are all going to be married to the number you already predetermined. Which came first? The need or the number?

MS. TOWNSEND: The need. This is -- as Dan noted, this has been an ongoing concern and gotten ongoing attention from the President. There have been -- there's an ongoing dialogue between DHS and DOD and the precise number and timing of those deployments will be based on mission assignments and the requirements. What we're saying is it's up to 6,000 for the first year, and then we will reduce that overall number over the -- after that.

Q Dan, the President, when it came to No Child Left Behind, ridiculed people who judged a program by inputs. He said you must judge a program not by how much money you spend on education, but by what you get out of it. But you're doing exactly this here. You're saying we're spending more on Border Patrol, and what people out at the grassroots are asking is, show us some evidence that what you're doing works. What are you offering as evidence that what you're doing works?

MR. BARTLETT: Well, he will use a very powerful figure in the speech tonight. During his presidency, we've denied 6 million people -- apprehended and returned back 6 million people. That is what our efforts and the increased Border Patrol funding and agents have resulted in. We've also, as Fran pointed out, cut the time it has taken for us to deport those who are what's called OTMs, other than Mexicans, that have to go to other countries. We've cut that administrative time almost in half. So there are tangible benefits and results based on the investments we've made to date.

The question is, or the point that the President will make is, we can and must do more; these additional resources and dollars will get additional results. So it is very similar.

Q But what you're hearing from the grassroots, though, is what you're talking about is the increase is less than it might have been otherwise. But people are still seeing a flood. And what you're hearing from a lot of people and what you see in a lot of in the polling is that people want proof the border is secure before they want to talk about anything else. Why can't you make some kind of proposal like that?

MR. BARTLETT: Well, I think that is the most important point about this debate, is that the idea that they can all be solved just by putting focus on the border is something the President takes issue with. He is making the argument that a temporary worker program is an integral part of solving the border enforcement issue. The more people you have coming across a bridge, through a rational system, that we know who is coming across, the less people that are trying to go over fences or go through the back of an 18 wheeler. It's the very point he's going to make, is that you can't do this piecemeal. The only way you can rationally solve our border enforcement problem is to have a rational guest worker program.

Q On the National Guard, did I hear right, they're going to -- each Guardsman is going to be there for three or four weeks, by training?

MS. TOWNSEND: Their annual training requirement is two to three weeks. And so what you will do is you will, at any one time -- 6,000 represents about 2 percent of the overall strength of the National Guard. It won't be the same 6,000 people there for 12 months, it -- as I said, it will depend on mission assignments. But what you will do is, during -- that 6,000, at any one time, will be comprised of individual Guardsmen doing their annual training requirement.

Q They have two weeks -- are they going to have any special training to do this? I mean, you're going to just -- instead of having their regular training, you're going to send them to the border, and say, hey, do the border now?

MS. TOWNSEND: I'd like you to focus back on what I said in my initial comments, and that is, you're not going to have Guardsmen at the border doing apprehensions, detentions and returns. That's not what they're going there to do. They will go there based on mission assignments like intelligence, surveillance, infrastructure building. That will free up Border Patrol agents, who are the nation's premier experts on apprehensions and detentions to focus on that work. And so what -- you're playing to everybody's strength and expertise. It's not as though they're being -- they're being assigned down to the border in the area in which they are trained and do have expertise.

MR. BARTLETT: I do want to say for the record, of my personal pre-No Child Left Behind schooling, I said 2 percent to 3 percent this morning on the morning shows, which generated a much larger number. Math was never my strong point.

Q Fran, could you explain how -- did you say that states will be asked to provide these folks? The states will be sort of sending governors and receiving governors. How do you pick the sending governors? Do they have to send them? Are they required to send them? And is this all going to be paid for through this \$1.9 billion? Will states have any additional costs?

MS. TOWNSEND: The National Guard -- the federal government will pay for it, and they will be Title 32 National Guard troops. It will be an agreement -- the way this is typically handled is between a memorandum of understanding between the sending governor and the receiving governor. The receiving governor then has operational control, just as you would imagine, commander-in-chief within their state.

The sending state retains what we would call administrative control over them. It's sort of the paperwork end of things. And so we will make these -- the National Guard Bureau under General Blum has the best view into where the expertise among the different Guard units are, where their training has been, and what best Guard -- what Guard units best fit the mission requirements set

by DHS. And so it's coordination among the National Guard, the governors and the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense.

MR. BARTLETT: I would just add -- and I'm not an expert on this, but I play one -- you would think a default approach also would be as the border state governors' National Guard units, if they have those capabilities in the state, we just reimburse New Mexico, Arizona, et cetera. You at first, obviously, look at the proximity issue. But if it gets to an issue of where you're looking at needs versus if you have an engineering unit in another part of the country that can bring to bear resources and expertise, or expertise on high fencing, or building -- or sensors or something like that, then you're going to bring them in.

Q What if the governor in a state like that -- if you identify a unit with the expertise, can the governor say, no, I can't afford to send them?

MR. BARTLETT: Well, we will take the price tag issue off the table for them, and we're also looking at manpower issue to make sure they'll be able to reach their core mission of whether it be their contribution to the war on terror, or preparedness -- or natural disaster preparedness.

Q But can a sending governors say "no"?

MR. BARTLETT: Sure.

MS. TOWNSEND: Yes. This is predicated on the agreement between the sending and the receiving governor.

Q So they're not being federalized?

MS. TOWNSEND: No, that's correct. They are not being federalized.

MR. SNOW: The governors still serve as commanders-in-chief of their own National Guards.

Q What if the receiving governor doesn't want them?

MR. SNOW: The receiving governor has to ask for them.

MR. BARTLETT: We're going to coordinate with those governor's offices. I think many of the concerns we've heard from governors when it comes to having such an arrangement is the price tag, that they didn't want to incur those costs at the state level. By the federal government taking that burden off of them, we believe that they'll be more open to it. But, obviously, there will be a lot of discussions in the days and weeks ahead to work out all the details that -- some of the questions you're asking -- with those respective commanders-in-chiefs of those Guard units.

Q Dan, as the debate began, Harry Reid said the President must denounce the House bill. Is the President prepared to, or does he resent these sort of markers being put down?

MR. BARTLETT: Well, I think what the President has articulated that denouncements and finger-pointing and opposition to has not been his approach on this issue, and if we're going to get something done on this issue it has to build more from consensus. As we have said all along, our legislative strategy is to continue to try to move this process forward. Does that mean that we endorse very crossed T or dotted I either in the House or the Senate legislation that's now

moving? No. But what it does say is we want this process -- much like on Medicare and other issues -- to be reconciled in the two chambers so we can get into a conference and try to work out the differences between the two.

Q Do any of these efforts apply to the Canadian border, or is this exclusively the Mexican border we're talking about?

MS. TOWNSEND: The focus of the entire initiative has been the Southwest border, but we remain open, if there are governors interested along the Northern border -- there's no, by necessity, limitation. And we remain open and working with those governors.

Q How much out of the federal treasury is going to pay for the 6,000 Guardsmen? You spoke of it coming out of the \$1.9 billion -- how much of that would be Guard?

MR. BARTLETT: Well, there's too many variables at this point. We're talking to Congress right now and including the appropriators; I think it's more appropriate for us to allow those briefings to go forward. We'll have information for you after the President's speech.

MR. KAPLAN: But we do envision the -- it comes out of -- the \$1.9 billion will cover the '06 and '07 costs assumed for the National Guard deployment -- fiscal year '06 and fiscal year '07 costs.

Q You're talking about providing legal status to most of the 600,000 or so people who are added to our illegal population every year. Making them legal, though, does not solve the problems at the local level caused by the presence of so many people at the bottom rungs of our economy. Schools, hospitals, neighborhood effect, that sort of thing. Does the President see a larger federal role in that effort, at least in terms of funding for the local entities?

MR. KAPLAN: Well, first of all, for almost all social services that individuals receive, particularly low-income individuals receive, the federal government does have a role, and the federal government will continue to fulfill that role.

MR. BARTLETT: And I'd also argue by having a rational system in place where people are actually paying taxes into the system and being good citizens that are contributing to society, just not from their employment, but also by, like I said, paying taxes, that does ease the burden on local communities, local hospitals, the schools --

MR. KAPLAN: That's true, as well, with Medicare and Social Security. A lot of the people you're talking about who will come through a temporary worker program are younger, able-bodied, working individuals, and that actually helps relieve some pressure on some of the bigger entitlement programs.

Q What is the \$1.9 billion currently allocated for?

MR. KAPLAN: This was an amendment that I think was sponsored by Senator Gregg, and largely, it goes towards capital assets. It also includes \$600 million for the Coast Guard recapitalization. We think, obviously, that we've got a good approach for how to most effectively spend that money to secure the border and we're going to be working with Senator Gregg and other members of Congress as they proceed through conference on the supplemental.

Q Let me ask you something about that, following up on that. You know, that money, if I remember correctly, was all supposed to be used for things like UAVs, because the only one that they had crashed two weeks ago. And so you're going to have a real competition for the same purpose, right? I mean, have you gotten these appropriators and budget chairmen to agree to this proposed budget that you have?

MR. KAPLAN: We've had some conversations. That's something that we'll -- I mean, they're in conference and we'll work with them on it. There is some overlap and there is -- some of the \$1.9 billion that we would propose does include some capital assets and some tactical infrastructure that will help leverage these increased manpower assets. But it's something we're going to work on with the senators and the representatives. And I think at the end of the day they'll agree that the President puts forward a very effective approach to maximizing our security on the border.

Q If these National Guard troops aren't involved in apprehension, will they still be armed?

MS. TOWNSEND: I'm sorry?

Q Will the Guard troops still be armed on the border?

MS. TOWNSEND: The Guard -- again, I come back to, you're not going to see Guardsmen on the border doing apprehensions. Troops who are deployed will be armed, as they normally would be, and will have the right of self defense. But that's not what they're -- if you're on the border, and you're building tactical infrastructure, they will obviously be armed, and they're trained to use those arms, but that is -- the purpose of that is not to do apprehensions and detentions.

Q Why not, because legally they are allowed to, I understand, if they're under state control, is that right?

MS. TOWNSEND: You're getting into the notion of the National Guardsmen who got MP training are able -- are not restricted by posse comitatus?

Q Yes.

MS. TOWNSEND: Yes. The decision was the best use -- this was based on the conversations between DHS and DOD, including the Border Patrol -- the best use of the Guard was to have the Border Patrol focused on apprehensions and detentions, and have the National Guard bring that expertise that they could free more Border Patrol agents up to do that.

MR. BARTLETT: And the President says in the speech that we're not militarizing our border. And that's an important policy point, as well.

MR. SNOW: There's a further point, too, which is if you're trying to do a long-term solution to this, what you do is you train up people who are going to do this for a living, rather than National Guardsmen who will be rotating in and out; therefore you develop a permanent cadre of people whose full-time job it is to do border enforcement.

Q So I'm trying to get an idea of how limited or extensive this National Guard deployment will be. Fran, you said up to 6,000 for the first year, we'll reduce that overall -- the overall numbers after that. So are we saying two, three years down the road then we will no longer need the

National Guard on the borders? What is the picture of success at the end, when it comes to just the deployment of the Guard?

MS. TOWNSEND: For planning purposes, what we're looking at is 6,000 in the -- not more than 6,000 for a year, and then not more than 3,000 for the second year, for not more than 12 months. That's the second 12 months. The idea is, by the end of that period of time, you've got the 6,000 additional Border Patrol agents trained and ready to deploy. And so this is a bridge strategy, if you will.

Q Two years only?

MS. TOWNSEND: Right. The notion is -- that's right -- is to have a bridge strategy while you're training up the experts, and the full-time, permanent cadre who will do the enforcement.

Q Fran, you said all 6,000 would be on their training stints, or just some portion of it?

MS. TOWNSEND: The hope is that you can do, by and large, it with the training stints, the annual training obligation of National Guardsmen. Obviously, depending on what expertise is required, it may not be able to do the whole thing that way, but that is the planning assumption going in, is to be able to do most of it that way.

Q But that means you've got people rotating in and out every three weeks.

MR. BARTLETT: Which is something that the Guard does routinely. There's guys who rotate in and out of doing work in the war on terror overseas for three weeks. This is a highly-coordinated, synchronized system. That's one role that the National Guard at the bureau level can help coordinate and play, to rotate people in and out based on need and based on capability.

MR. KAPLAN: There's also a fairly long-standing practice of doing this on the Southern border. I think over the last -- I'm not sure how many -- almost 20 years, they've been doing this in counternarcotic enforcement, working with the Border Patrol. So the Border Patrol is very comfortable with this, and knows how to deploy the National Guard for these purposes.

Q You're making the argument that you've got 6,000 people rotating every two or three weeks, trying to accomplish jobs to assist the Border Patrol? Hello? I mean, can this really work?

MR. BARTLETT: Hello? Yes. (Laughter.) Bill, this is a highly-sophisticated enterprise, but that's what they deploy themselves to do. I mean, we do bombing rotations from Missouri all the way to the Middle East and back. They do have the --

Q For three weeks?

MR. BARTLETT: What?

Q For three weeks?

MR. BARTLETT: They do them on a nightly basis. There is a capacity and a capability, and really the role -- when you talk about, what's the role of the federal government when you have various states doing compacts together, is the Guard, as she said -- that General Blum and those

can look at the national assets and help with the logistics to moving rotations in and out on a very routine basis. And it's something that they're very good at doing.

Right now, for example, sometimes annual training done by Texas Guard units, they go to Arkansas, they go to other states. It's something they're familiar with. Now are we increasing the tempo and the scope of it? Yes, but it can be done.

Q So you're talking about 100,000 or more individuals who will rotate through that duty over the course of two years, right?

MS. TOWNSEND: That's right. If you do the math, it works out to be -- if you look at the total strength of the Guard, which is between 440,000 and 450,000, you figure 6,000 people, which is 2 percent of the Guard. If you assume nobody winds up there more than once, it could be a maximum of 156,000 Guardsmen rotating through the southwest border assignment during this period.

Q Has any governor said, not our troops?

MS. TOWNSEND: There have been discussions with the states at a staff level. We're going to have to work with -- and we look forward to working with the governors to make sure that we understand what their needs are --

Q But there have been some objections from governors?

MS. TOWNSEND: No, I didn't say that there have been objections; I'm not aware of them. There have been discussions at a staff level.

MR. KAPLAN: I think people, generally, without knowledge of the facts, have raised concerns about manpower strengths. And I think as we walk them through how these -- how the objectives can be met without straining their capacity to respond to natural disasters and things like that, we believe most governors will be reassured by that.

Q You said the President supports this, sort of, notion that an illegal immigrant who has been here five years should be treated differently than an illegal immigrant who has been here one year. Can you talk about the philosophical underpinnings of basically saying, I stole your car five years ago, but I haven't gotten a speeding ticket since, and I should be treated differently than if I stole it six months ago?

MR. BARTLETT: Well, I don't know where you got five years, but I --

Q The Senate has talked about that, if you --

MR. BARTLETT: They talked --

Q Five years, but he said the longer that someone has been here --

MR. KAPLAN: I assume that the rational middle ground should recognize that there are differences between someone who has been here recently and someone who has been here a long time and who has built a home and a family and has contributed to our society.

MR. SNOW: Let's get to your analogy for a moment, because you said I stole your car five years ago and I did now. You know, this program, number one, the President says there's not going to be amnesty. In other words, for those who have come here illegally, you're going to find you've got some tax obligations, you've got to keep your nose clean, you've got to keep working. It is not simply -- you know, amnesty means, hey, all is forgiven, go about -- go at it as you were.

You've got at least four separate requirements here, and one can say that there is a difference between somebody who has held a job, paid taxes, obeyed the law, contributed to Social Security, and done those for an extended period of time as opposed to somebody who came over two weeks ago. But where you draw the lines, we will -- that's an issue to be decided. But the point is, I think one can make the argument to somebody who has stayed here -- to use a Clintonian phrase -- has worked hard and played by the rules, that is something where people say to themselves, okay, there may be differences.

Q But you said it's not amnesty. If it's not amnesty -- they have to have not done anything illegal, but it is amnesty for the fact they did something illegal --

MR. SNOW: It's a funny kind of amnesty where this is a misdemeanor. This is a misdemeanor where you can get a stiff fine, where you're going to pay taxes, where you're going to go to the back of the line if you want to become a citizen. If you break the law, you're out. You've got to hold a job continuously. That is probably stiffer than any similar set of circumstances one can think of.

Amnesty -- 1986, or whatever -- amnesty is, we forget about it, everybody stay. We'll start all over.

Q But didn't they break the law by coming here?

MR. KAPLAN: And they'll pay their obligation to society.

MR. SNOW: Yes, you pay a fine for breaking the law.

Q You all are making this argument, but as you know there's a good many Republicans who are saying -- who take the argument, but say it's still a question of how long ago did you break the law to come into this country. So I understand the argument you're making, but you're up against -- particularly House Republicans -- who are saying, sorry, no deal here, this is a non-starter. So how do you overcome that? I know the argument.

MR. SNOW: Well, the political process is going to have to work its way out. But I think what the President is trying to do is to insert a little bit of precision in the use of the term amnesty. There is a significant difference. We've already pointed out the benchmarks that people are going to have to surmount if they want to become eligible to be citizens. I mean, this gives them an opportunity to stand in line for, what, a dozen years.

Q Can you be specific about what fine, how long, how many guest workers?

MR. SNOW: No.

MR. BARTLETT: That's part of the negotiations --

Q None of that is going to be laid out tonight?

MR. BARTLETT: The specific level of fines? No.

Q After all, we all have had -- I think every newspaper in this country has had a letter to the editor from someone who said, it's laughable when you talk about \$1,000 or \$2,000 fine. I paid more than that to come here illegally. Where do I go to get a refund?

MR. BARTLETT: But see, you're also suggesting that that fine is going to pay for citizenship, which is not the case. In fact, they have to go through all of the rigmarole that somebody who did it through the legal process, they're going to have to do that. They don't jump to the front of the line. They don't get special privileges because they paid a fine. That's just to get clean. That's just to get good.

Then they have to step to the back of the line and meet all the requirements for a green card, for citizenship. They're not getting any sort of preferential treatment. In fact, not only do they go to the back of the line, they go to the back of the line with additional penalties in back -- in the taxes, in the fines. And those type of specific elements of how much those fines would be are a part of the negotiation during a conference.

Q Do they have to leave the country?

Q -- penalties are not rough. Why draw a line, then? If it's that tough, shouldn't that be tough enough for those people who have been here less than two years, as well?

MR. BARTLETT: That the --

Q If what you're saying is true, that this is not amnesty that you're doing for those who have been here -- Hagel-Martinez bill, those who've been here five years or two years, depending on which of those categories -- if that's true that that's not amnesty and those penalties are pretty tough on those folks, why draw the line at all? Why not anybody who's here illegally pays those tough --

MR. BARTLETT: There are other requirements we're talking about, what Tony also talked about would be contributing to society, has a job, has those things, has children that are in school here who are probably legal themselves. There's other mitigating factors in addition to that, which you wouldn't find in somebody who had just gotten here in the last six months or so, and somebody who has deep roots here and has been here for 15, 20 years.

Q Just to follow up on the northern border, what, in the speech or in this plan about the Canada-U.S. border?

MR. BARTLETT: This is specific to the southern border, and that's -- this speech will be exclusive to that.

Q -- National Guard troops, would they go regardless of what happens with the immigration bill on the Hill? Other than the supplemental -- obviously, you need the money -- but does he need any congressional authority for this?

MR. BARTLETT: No.

Q So this is going ahead regardless of what happens with the guest worker program?

MS. TOWNSEND: It's the agreement between the governors.

Q What does it mean to end catch and release? What do you do with these people once they're going to be detained in these additional beds? Do you prosecute them? Do you find some other way to deal with them?

MS. TOWNSEND: It depends on the circumstances. I can't answer that as a general matter. You either prosecute them or you return them. We put pressure on countries like China and India to accept back their citizens who have entered here illegally.

Q Can you talk about these Mexicans --

MR. BARTLETT: There are some factors that also have -- there are some legal treaty obligations -- El Salvador, some other things, that have to be -- that's what we're talking about, congressional authority. You have -- there is still a logistical problem of -- it's just -- instead of somebody kind of bused across back, you've got to put them on planes and do that. So that's why it takes so long to deal with them. But if there's -- there are crimes committed, and things like that, it obviously will be --

Q The ones that are being processing in 24-hours now, that come over the border from Mexico, that you were talking about before, what's going to happen instead of being brought back within 24-hours?

MR. KAPLAN: Catch and release doesn't refer to Mexicans, it refers to other than Mexicans.

Q Okay, so does it change what happens to the people from Mexico?

MR. BARTLETT: No. We're moving them -- taking them back on an average in 24-hours.

Q So that continues?

MS. TOWNSEND: Yes.

MR. BARTLETT: Hopefully.

Q The Heritage Foundation analyzed the bill that's on the Senate floor and came up with a statistic that in the next 20 years, you're talking about 100 million illegal immigrants coming into the United States, which would have a profound challenge to assimilation and really change the culture of this country. And I was wondering if the White House has a position as to, you know, what is the ballpark of how many legal immigrants we should be accepting in the next 20 years, 10 years, five years?

MR. KAPLAN: How many legal immigrants?

Q Yes.

MR. KAPLAN: I think that that's also something that needs to be worked out in the context of the conference between the House and Senate, where I think the idea is to let the Senate act.

Obviously, they've got some numbers in their bill, but that will be something that we'll want to engage in when it gets into the conference situation.

The Heritage Report, I have not read it. First of all, it's analyzing a bill that's on the Senate floor, which we're not -- we're talking about getting into conference and negotiating a bill, so I'm not sure whether the Senate bill is the right benchmark.

I understand there may be some double counting going on in the analysis in that bill -- excuse me, in that report from Heritage, but again, I have not --

MR. SNOW: We've got some people looking through --

MR. KAPLAN: We've got people looking at it, but it's -- but at the end of the day, you also have to look at the points that Dan made earlier on a similar question, is that these are people who will be paying taxes and contributing as workers in our society, and we'll also be mitigating some of the drains on Social Security and Medicare because they'll be paying in as workers.

MR. SNOW: Okay, I want to do two more people we haven't heard from.

Q Children of guest workers born in the U.S., are they automatic citizens?

MR. BARTLETT: -- get back --

Q It's in the Constitution. They haven't got a choice, it's in the Constitution.

Q This won't affect at all?

MR. BARTLETT: Yes. No it won't affect --

Q You said the President is not going to give specifics on the guest worker program and the legal -- path to legalization. Will he make it clear that his approach is a parallel approach to one that's on the Senate floor? In other words, maybe not give years and fine amounts, but is that the general direction he's going to signal he's going?

MR. KAPLAN: What he's going to signal is that he's for a comprehensive bill and he's going to lay out what constitutes a comprehensive bill. And one of the things is, as I talked about, is recognizing the reality that you're not going to deport 8 million to 12 million illegal immigrants who are currently here. And he's going to lay out what he thinks some of the meaningful distinctions are that you have to look at. And he's going to lay out what it is that he would -- what types of things that these people will need to do before they're eligible to apply for citizenship and stay in this country, because he is not for, as we talked about at length here, he's not for amnesty and just allowing people an automatic path to citizenship. He's not going to negotiate the conference report from the Oval Office -- tonight, anyway.

MR. SNOW: All right. Thank you very much.

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President Bush Discusses Border Security and Immigration Reform in Arizona

Yuma Sector Border Patrol Headquarters
Yuma, Arizona

 In Focus: Immigration

12:51 P.M. PDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much for allowing me to come by and say hello. It's good to be here in Yuma. I'd never been to Yuma before. (Laughter.) I'd like to come back. It's a hospitable place with good weather. (Laughter.) Remember, I was raised in West Texas. (Laughter.)

I've come down here to first of all thank the men and women of the Border Patrol for doing a fine job on behalf of the American people. A lot of time you don't get the credit you deserve, but there's a lot of folks who understand how hard you work. And we really appreciate it. So on behalf of a grateful nation, thanks for doing an important job. (Applause.)

I'm down here to talk about the immigration issue. And this is an important issue. It really is. It's an important debate our country is having. We need to have -- we need to secure our border, and we need fair and effective immigration laws. The other night I spoke to the country about the way I see it, and I'm looking forward to working with the United States Congress to get something done.

There's a lot of politics in Washington, D.C. And it's time to get rid of all the politics and do what's right for the United States of America and help you do your job. And that's why I've come to this part of the world. I wanted to hear firsthand from David and Ronald Colburn what they need to get the job done, and where we're making progress and where we aren't making progress.

I think it helps to have the President out here, seeing the part of the area of the country that one time was overrun by people coming in here, that's beginning to get settled down because of a strategy that's being employed. And so I really want to thank you all for greeting me. Plus I liked riding in the dune buggy. (Laughter.)

I appreciate very much your governor for being here. Governor Napolitano is with us today. Thank you very much for coming. I'm honored you're here. She's an important person as part of helping to implement this strategy -- after all, she's the commander-in-chief of the Arizona National Guard. And I'm going to talk a little bit about the Guard's presence here on the border to help the Border Patrol do its job.

But I also want to thank the members of the United States Congress who flew out here with me. It's a good bunch, a little rambunctious at times, but they're -- I enjoy being with them. I call them friends. Congressmen Kolbe, Hayworth, Shadegg, Flake and Franks -- appreciate you guys taking time out of your day to come down. You care a lot about your state, and you care a lot about this issue. And I appreciate you being here.

I want to thank Senator Ken Bennett. He's the president of the Arizona Senate. Senator, you didn't need to come down here, but I'm grateful you did. And I also want to thank Speaker

Weiers for being here, as well. I appreciate your interest in the subject. The mayor -- Mayor Larry Nelson is with us. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming.

I want to thank all the other state and local officials. I want to thank Major General David Rataczak. He's the head of the Arizona National Guard. We're going to be working with our Guard. Don't go overboard for the guy. (Laughter.) We're going to be working closely with our Guard around the country to help the Border Patrol do its job.

I want to thank all the folks who are here for taking time out of your day to give me a chance to come and visit. I particularly want to thank the local law enforcement officials, as well.

I understand that illegal immigration is a serious problem. And one of our jobs in public office is to fix problems, is to deal with a problem in a rational way and not pass them on to other people. And I spoke to the country the other night because I want to fix the problem. And I want to work with people in Washington to do so. People here know firsthand that illegal immigration puts big pressure on our local communities, puts pressures on the schools, puts pressures on the hospitals, puts pressure on the state and local budgets, puts pressures on your penal system. I know that.

Our country is a country of laws, and we've got to enforce our laws. But we're also a nation of immigrants. And we've got to remember that proud tradition, as well, which has strengthened our country in many ways. These are not contradictory goals to remember our heritage and uphold our laws. America can be a lawful society and a welcoming society at the same time.

There's a debate in Washington, and the House started the debate by passing a strong enforcement bill last December. And now the Senate is debating. And I do want to compliment the senators from this state -- Senator McCain and Senator Kyl -- for taking the lead. They understand the importance of getting this issue solved, and they're on the floor of the Senate debating a good immigration bill. And they've offered thoughtful proposals for which I am grateful.

The Senate needs to get the bill out, and get it to what they call the conference committee so we can work hard to iron out the differences between the House and the Senate. I support -- strongly support a comprehensive reform bill, though. It needs to have five key elements to it.

First, as I mentioned to you, we're going to secure our borders. That is the duty of our country. It's a sovereign responsibility. We want the border to be open to trade and lawful immigration, and we want our borders shut to illegal immigrants, as well as criminals and drug dealers and terrorists. That's the objective.

You might remember I was the governor of a border state, so I understand how big the border is. I would suggest to members of Congress as they debate this issue that they ought to come down and take a look at the border, see what it's really like. It requires an intense focus of resources and assets in order to secure this border. It also requires a comprehensive strategy, as well.

Since I became the President we've increased funding for our border security by 66 percent. That's helped upgrade equipment, infrastructure. Border Patrol agents have gone from 9,000 -- about 9,000 to nearly 12,000, a significant increase of Border Patrol agents so that we can have more people in the front lines of doing our duty.

Here we've added about -- more than 100 Border Patrol agents in the Yuma sector in the last year. In other words, people are beginning to see, those on the front line of protecting the border are beginning to see additional agents coming on board. That's about an increase of 20 percent to more than 660 agents. This border -- this sector was overwhelmed at one time from people coming across illegally. I understand that. And one way to help deal with that problem is to increase the number of agents on the front line, which is what the leadership of the Border Patrol has done.

We saw some new fencing taking place. It makes sense to use fencing along the border in key locations in order to do our job. We saw lighting. I just saw the cameras in place where we're beginning to install -- modernize the border is what I'm telling you. We're in the process of making our border the most technologically advanced border in the world.

Interestingly enough, I don't think enough Americans know this, but over the past five years, federal agents, like our Border Patrol agents, have apprehended and sent home about 6 million people -- 6 million people since 2001 have come into this country illegally. I mean, we've got some people working hard.

Last year, agents in the Yuma sector apprehended more than 70,000 illegal entrants. That's up from 14 percent [sic]. People's work is making a difference, but we do not have full control of the border. And that's what I want you all to understand I realize, and a lot of people in Congress realize.

And so here's the part -- here's the strategy. We're going to increase our Border Patrol by another 6,000 agents that will have doubled the Border Patrol from 2001. We should have those agents on line by 2008. We're going to make sure we continue to be wise about how we enable you to do your job better, with technologies and high-tech fences in urban corridors and patrol roads and barriers in rural areas and motion sensors, infrared cameras, unmanned aerial vehicles. All the equipment is aimed to enable the Border Patrol to do their job. We're adding additional equipment which will enable the 18,000 Border Patrol agents we'll have in place to be able to effectively control this border.

It's going to take time to get the technology in place, and it's going to take time to train the Border Patrol agents. And yet, the need to enforce the border is urgent, and that's why, in coordination with our governors, we're going to send 6,000 National Guard troops to be deployed on the southern border.

Now, the reason why I think this strategy is important is because deploying the 6,000 troops to complement the work of the Border Patrol will get immediate results. And it's time to get immediate results. And so I want to thank governors like Janet for her understanding about the need to utilize assets to do our job, to enforce the border.

The Guard is going to support border control efforts. And the Border Patrol, of course, will be in the lead. The Guard will operate surveillance and communications systems. They will install fences and vehicle barriers. They're going to help build patrol roads. They'll analyze intelligence. They will help spot people. But the Border Patrol will be involved in direct law enforcement. The Guard is going to free up agents to be in direct contact with those trying to sneak across. It is -- the Guard is complementary. The Guard makes it easier for the Border Patrol to do its job.

And the initial commitment will last for about a year for the 6,000 for the Guard, and after that, the forces will be reduced as new Border Patrol agents and new equipment comes online.

There are more than 400 Guard members deployed along the southwest border. In other words, this is something we've tried. This isn't anything new. The governor has deployed Guard down here before. We've got Guard already helping the Border Patrol right now. The missions are directly related to their specific skills. In this sector, men and women from the Arizona Guard are assisting with communications and intelligence. Guard personnel from Pennsylvania and Ohio are helping install new infrastructure and technology.

So the strategy I'm announcing -- I announced last Monday has already started to work. State and local law enforcement in border communities are also a part of the strategy. And so we're going to draw on their expertise and provide new resources. We're going to increase federal funding for state and local authorities assisting the Border Patrol on targeted law enforcement missions. The federal government isn't telling you what to do. But we are saying that if you choose to help the Border Patrol, that you'll be reimbursed for targeted enforcement missions. And we're going to help -- we'll give state and local authorities specialized training to help federal officers apprehend and detain illegal immigrants.

As we catch more people crossing the border illegally, we got to make sure they're all returned home. And one of the problems we've had here in the border, that Border Patrol agents will tell you, is the problem of catch and release. Now, more than 85 percent of illegal immigrants caught -- who get caught crossing the border are from Mexico. And they're sent home within 24 hours, and that's good. Part of having a secure border is people have got to understand when you're caught, you're sent home.

But the problem is, is that it's not so easy to send home illegal immigrants from other countries. For many years, we didn't have enough space in detention facilities. You all know that. And so what would happen is, somebody would get caught, the Border Patrol would do their job, they'd work hard to enforce the border, and some of the -- a judge would say, show back up, we'll see you back here in 30 days. Well, guess what? There was nobody back in 30 days. They went and headed into society. We've got to stop that practice. In order to make sure the Border Patrol is effective and do their jobs, I can't think of, frankly, anything more discouraging than to be out there doing -- working as hard as you possibly can, apprehend somebody, and the next thing you know, they're let back out.

And so we're going to add detention facilities. We'll continue to -- we've added some already, we're going to continue to add more. We're going to expedite the legal process to cut the average deportation time. And the State Department, along with the White House, is going to continue to work with governments to say, look, we want you to take these folks back; you've got to make sure that when we start sending them back that you take them back.

And we're making some pretty good progress. We've caught -- we've ended catch and release for illegal immigrants from some countries. And so I'm going to ask country for funding and legal authority to end catch and release at the southern border once and for all for all countries.

I strongly believe that to have -- secure the border, we need to have a temporary worker program. And the reason why I do, is I understand there are many people on the other side of the border

who will do anything to come and work. And that includes risking their life crossing your desert, or being willing to be stuffed in the back of an 18-wheeler. I believe in order for the Border Patrol to be able to effectively do their job, we've got to have a plan in place that will reduce the people who are trying to sneak across.

A temporary worker program would create a legal path for foreign workers to enter a country in an orderly way for a limited period of time. A temporary worker program would reduce the number of people trying to sneak across. A temporary worker program would reduce the appeal of human smugglers. There's a whole industry that has sprung up that traffics in human beings, that degrades the human soul. Coyotes -- that's a familiar word here in this part of the world. A lot of people around the country don't understand what a coyote is, but they're somebody who, for money, will smuggle people into the United States so they can work.

We want to know who is coming in the country, and who is not coming in the country. And so I think it makes sense to say, if someone is willing to do a job Americans aren't doing, here's a temporary way to come and work; here's a tamper-proof card, so you don't have to sneak across the border, you could walk across the border, and you can do that work, and when your time is up, you go home.

Now these people are going to have to pass a criminal background check, but we've got to recognize there are people here doing jobs Americans aren't doing. You know it as well as anybody in this part of the world. And it seems like to me there ought to be an orderly way, a rational way to deal with those workers with a temporary work plan.

And by the way, issuing a card, a tamper-proof card, will make it easier for us to enforce the law in the interior of our country. It is against the law for an employer to hire somebody who is here illegally. That's the law of the United States. We're a nation of laws, we'll uphold the laws, but how can you ask employers to uphold the laws when they're not sure whether the documents they're looking at are fraudulent?

So not only has the current immigration system caused a whole smuggling industry to come up, but there's also a document forgery industry. We want our employers to be able to be confident about who they're hiring. That's why we need a tamper-proof ID card, based upon modern biometrics.

Fourth, it is important to resolve the status of million [sic] illegal immigrants who are here already. First of all, in this debate there should be -- nobody should be given an automatic citizenship -- that's called amnesty. I oppose amnesty. Amnesty would be unfair to those who are here lawfully, to those who have played by the rules. Amnesty would undermine the rule of law. And amnesty would invite a further wave of illegal immigrants.

There are some in this country who believe we ought to deport everybody who has been here. I just don't think it's going to work. I don't think it makes sense. And so I believe there's a rational middle ground between automatic citizenship and a program of mass deportation.

And here it is: First, it's important for the law to distinguish between someone who has crossed the border illegally recently and someone who has worked here for many years and has a home and raised a family and has a clean record. For that person, the person who has got roots in our country, I believe that person should pay a meaningful fine, pay their taxes, learn English, prove

they've worked in a job for a number of years, and then that person should be able to apply for citizenship, but would not be granted an automatic citizenship, but instead would be at the end of the citizenship line.

In other words, people have been here legally, somebody who pays their dues, pays their taxes, pays a fine, proven to be a good citizen, they get at the end of the line. Someone said, well, that's amnesty -- that's not amnesty. Amnesty is automatic citizenship. This is a rational way to deal with people who are God-fearing, decent people, and respect their dignity at the same time.

Fifth, we've got to honor the great American tradition of the melting pot. Americans are bound together by shared ideals and appreciation of our history, of respect for our flag and ability to speak the English language. There's certain things that unite us, no matter where we're from, or what our background has been.

I want people to understand, as we go through this debate, that I fully understand English is the key to unlocking opportunity in America. Part of the greatness of America is that we've been able to help assimilate people into our society, people from all kinds of backgrounds who have come here to seek a better life and become American, because we have the capacity to assimilate.

And part of that assimilation process is English. I believe this: If you learn English, and you're a hard worker, and you have a dream, you have the capacity from going from picking crops to owning the store, or from sweeping office floors to being an office manager. That's been the greatness of America, when you think about it. People have come here with a dream, and have worked hard, and realized that dream.

And yet, because we're from different backgrounds, we've all been able to be one America, one nation under God. And so part of a rational immigration plan has got to remember that helping people assimilate into our society is a really important part of making sure we have an immigration system that works.

I strongly believe that Congress needs to pass a comprehensive immigration bill, because you cannot secure the border unless you have all elements of a comprehensive plan in place. Doing our duty to secure the border requires a comprehensive approach. The United States Senate needs to end by the act -- act by the end of this month. They need to do their duty and get a bill out so we can get on about the business of getting a comprehensive bill to my desk.

We have a duty in Washington, D.C. to conduct this debate with dignity and honor. Immigration is an emotional issue. Sometimes people get carried away on the issue, and they -- in doing so, they forget the greatness of our country, that we are a land of immigrants; that we've always been a haven for better opportunity; that we welcome people who are willing to abide by our laws and work hard and raise their family and trust in the Almighty. America's greatness has been and always will be the fact that we are one nation under God.

Thanks for letting me come by. (Applause.)

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President's Radio Address

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Earlier this week, I spoke to you from the Oval Office to lay out my vision for reforming our Nation's immigration system. And on Thursday, I went to Arizona to visit with the men and women of the Border Patrol. I wanted to get an update on their efforts because a secure America depends on a secure border.

I believe America can be a lawful society and a welcoming society at the same time. We must enforce our laws while honoring our proud immigrant heritage. So I support comprehensive immigration reform that will accomplish five clear objectives.

First, America must secure its borders. Since I became President, we've increased funding for border security by 66 percent, hired thousands more Border Patrol agents, and caught and sent home about 6 million illegal immigrants. Yet, we have much more work to do.

So this week I asked Congress to provide funding for dramatic improvements in manpower and technology at the border. We'll hire thousands more Border Patrol agents. And to help these agents do their jobs, we will deploy advanced technologies such as high-tech fences in urban areas, infrared cameras, and unmanned aerial vehicles. We'll also draw on the expertise of state and local law enforcement in our border communities and give them new resources and training so they can help secure our border.

Putting these new resources in place will take time. To help during this transition, up to 6,000 National Guard members will be deployed to our southern border. They will assist the Border Patrol by operating surveillance and communication systems, installing fences and vehicle barriers, building patrol roads, and analyzing intelligence. The support of Guard personnel will allow Border Patrol agents to use their skills to focus on securing the border.

Second, to secure our border we must create a temporary worker program that provides foreign workers a legal and orderly way to enter our country for a limited period of time. This program would reduce pressure on the border, meet the needs of our economy, and allow honest immigrants to provide for their families while respecting the law. And it will help us make certain we know who is in our country and why they are here.

Third, we need to hold employers to account for the workers they hire by creating a better system for verifying documents and work eligibility. The system should include a new tamper-proof identification card for every legal foreign worker. This card would help us enforce the law and leave employers with no excuse for breaking it. And by making it harder for illegal immigrants to find work in our country, we would discourage people from crossing the border illegally in the first place.

Fourth, we must resolve the status of millions of illegal immigrants who are already here. They should not be given an automatic path to citizenship. This is amnesty, and I oppose it. Amnesty would be unfair to those who are here lawfully, and it would invite further waves of illegal immigration.

Some people think any proposal short of mass deportation is amnesty. I disagree. There's a rational middle ground between automatic citizenship for every illegal immigrant and a program of mass deportation. Illegal immigrants who have roots in our country and want to stay should

have to pay a meaningful penalty, pay their taxes, learn English, and work in a job for a number of years. People who meet these conditions should be able to apply for citizenship -- but approval will not be automatic, and they will have to wait in line behind those who played by the rules and followed the law.

Fifth, we must honor the great American tradition of the melting pot by helping newcomers assimilate into our society. Americans are bound together by our shared ideals, an appreciation of our history, respect for our flag, and the ability to speak and write in English.

We will work to ensure that every new citizen fully embraces our common culture. When immigrants assimilate, they will advance in our society, realize their dreams, renew our spirit, and add to the unity of America.

Congress is now considering legislation on immigration reform. That legislation must be comprehensive. All elements of this problem must be addressed together or none of them will be solved at all. The House started the debate by passing an immigration bill, now the Senate should act by the end of this month, so we can work out the differences between the two bills, and Congress can pass a bill for me to sign into law.

We should approach this debate with confidence. America has shown before that we can enforce our laws and uphold our values, and we will do it again. Our Nation honors the heritage of all who've come here because we trust in our country's genius for making us all Americans, one Nation under God.

Thank you for listening.

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President Commends Senate for Passage of Bipartisan Immigration Reform

I commend the Senate for passing bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform before the Memorial Day deadline set by its Leaders. I appreciate the hard work of the Leadership and Senators on both sides of the aisle. An effective immigration reform bill will protect our borders, hold employers to account for the workers they hire, create a temporary worker program to take pressure off our border and meet the needs of our growing economy, address the issue of the millions of illegal immigrants already in our country, and honor America's great tradition of the melting pot. The House of Representatives began a national dialogue by passing an immigration bill last year. Now that the Senate has acted, I look forward to working together with both the House of Representatives and the Senate to produce a bill for me to sign into law.

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Withdrawal Marker

The George W. Bush Library

FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Memorandum	Immigration Reform - To: POTUS - From: Allyson Ho	3	05/31/2006	P5;

**This marker identifies the original location of the withdrawn item listed above.
For a complete list of items withdrawn from this folder, see the
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COLLECTION:

Staff Secretary, White House Office of the

SERIES:

Von Der Heydt, Thomas (Tommy) - Bush Record Policy Memos

FOLDER TITLE:

Immigration: A Timeline (2001 - 2008) [2]

FRC ID:

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- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

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President Discusses Comprehensive Immigration Reform

United States Chamber of Commerce
Washington, D.C.

8:50 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all, please be seated. (Applause.) Thank you. (Applause.) Thank you all very much. (Applause.) Thank you all. I told Michael to keep it short -- (laughter) -- and he did. Thanks for having me. Speaking about short, it's a short commute from where I work and live to this place. Thanks for having me, Tom.

I'm honored to be back here at the Chamber. I'm proud to be with some of America's finest entrepreneurs, job creators, risk-takers. And I'm also proud to be with leaders from the National Citizen Corps. I thank you all for joining us today. I thank you for representing the true strength of America, which are those who are willing to volunteer in our communities to make the country a better place. We got people from the Citizen Corps from all different backgrounds -- from business associations to government agencies, to community groups, to schools, to non-profits, to advocates for the disabled, and emergency responders.

Citizen Corps is making a significant difference in our country. When the hurricanes hit our Gulf Coast last year, members of the Citizen Corps played a critical role in the relief efforts. I want to thank you for answering the call to service. Congress needs to provide the Citizen Corps with the funding you need to keep our communities safe and prepared for emergencies.

Today, I want to talk about immigration, talk about the need for this country to have a comprehensive immigration reform. I'm going to spend a little time on making sure that work force enforcement is effective and an integral part of making sure we have a comprehensive immigration reform.

Before I do, I want to thank the Chamber very much for your strong advocacy of comprehensive immigration reform. I want to thank you and I want to thank your members for being an articulate, rational voice in the immigration debate.

I want to thank Chertoff for his service to our country. Excuse me -- Secretary Chertoff. Sometimes if you're from West Texas, you get a little familiar. (Laughter.) Still adjusting to the protocols here in Washington. (Laughter.) Of course, he knew what I was talking about.

I want to thank Ralph Basham, the Commissioner of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Thank you for being here, Ralph. Thanks for your service. Ralph ran the Secret Service so ably. Did such a fine job, I asked him to serve in this capacity. And he'll do a fine job there.

I want to thank David Aguilar. He's the Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol. David, it's good to see you. David and I recently went down to the border, and we took a good look at this long border. It gave me a chance to see firsthand what's taking place down there. It also gave me a chance to thank the Border Patrol agents, men and women who are working every day to do our job. And I want to thank you for your leadership.

I thank Julie Myers, Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. I want to thank Tracy Henke, Assistant Secretary, Office of Grants and Training for DHS. She is the chair of the National Citizen Corps Council. Again, thank you all for letting me come by.

One of the jobs of the government is to encourage entrepreneurship. We've done so in this administration, and as a result, America's risk-takers are -- and business owners, both small and large, are hiring people. If you want a job in America, you can find a job in America. This economy of ours is growing at 3.5 percent last year, 5.3 percent in the first quarter of this year. The national unemployment rate is 4.7 percent; 5.2 million new jobs have been created since August of 2003; small businesses are flourishing; productivity is high, after-tax income is up; home ownership is at an all-time level. This economy of the United States is strong, and we intend to keep it that way. (Applause.)

And the U.S. Chamber has been a strong supporter in making sure that Congress has sensible policies to keep this economy strong. And one of the most sensible things the United States Congress can do is to make the tax cuts we passed permanent. (Applause.)

You'll hear talk in Washington that says, well, you've got to raise taxes on people in order to balance the budget. That's not how Washington works. They're going to raise your taxes and they're going to figure out new ways to spend your money. The best way to balance this budget is to keep pro-growth economic policies in place and be fiscally wise about how we spend your money.

Pro-growth economic policies generate additional revenues for our treasury. Last year revenues exceeded expectations by about \$100 billion. This July we're going to find out whether it happened again. I hope it does. I think it might, because we're growing this economy. When the economy grows people pay taxes. And so the fundamental question is not whether or not we're going to have more revenues, the fundamental question is if we're going to have rational spending in order to balance this budget.

I told the United States Congress to get a \$92.2 billion supplemental to my desk. It's money needed to fund our troops. It's money needed to help the people down there in -- that we're affected by the hurricanes. It's money to do important other measures. But if they bust the \$92.2 billion I'm going to veto it. It's important for Washington to have fiscal sanity in order to balance this budget. (Applause.)

The fundamental question facing this country is, do we fear the future, or do we intend to shape it. I intend to shape the future so America remains the economic leader in the world, which means we've got to have a good legal policy. I want to thank the Chamber for being on the leading edge opposing -- and enabling me to sign meaningful tort reform. We don't need junk lawsuits running good people out of business. We don't need junk lawsuits running good doctors out of practice. What this country needs is a rational legal system that is fair and balanced. So I'm going to continue to work for tort reform in the halls of Congress.

We need a health care system that takes care of the elderly and the poor, but also recognizes that the best health care system is one in which the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats right here in Washington, D.C.

We need energy policy that's wise. We got a problem in America. We're too dependent on oil from parts of the world where people may not necessarily like us. So I proposed an advanced energy initiative, and I want to thank the Chamber for supporting me on helping this country diversify away from hydrocarbons.

Today I want to talk about immigration, and the Chamber of Commerce understands that in order for this country to be an economic leader, in order for this country to be a country that upholds our values, we've got to have an immigration system that is secure and orderly and fair.

For decades, this country has not been in control of its borders. Yet we have an obligation to the American people to secure our borders. That's a solemn obligation of the federal government. And as a result of not securing our borders, many who want to work in this economy have been able to sneak across.

This is an issue I'm familiar with, since I was the governor of Texas. You got to understand, there are people in our neighborhood who are desperate to put food on the table for their families. And if they, say, make \$7 in America versus 50 cents where they live, and they want to support their families, guess what -- they're going to try to sneak across the border. And many have been able to do so. And that illegal immigration has put pressure on our schools and hospitals, it's strained state and local budgets, and in some instances, bring crime to our neighborhood.

We have got to remember that the vast majority of illegal immigrants are decent people. They're hardworking people. They're people who love their families, people of faith, and people who lead responsible lives. They're part of American life and they are vital to our economy, and yet they're beyond the reach and protection of American law.

This nation is a nation of laws. And we're going to enforce our laws. That's what the American people expect. But we're also a nation of immigrants. And we must uphold that tradition which has strengthened this nation in so many ways. These aren't contradictory goals. America can be a lawful society and America can be a welcoming society at the same time.

Congress is moving forward on immigration reform. The House started this debate by passing a bill that focuses on border security and interior enforcement. Then the Senate had its debate, and it passed a comprehensive bill that also includes a temporary worker program and a plan to resolve the status of illegal immigrants who are already in this country. And now the two versions must be worked out in a conference committee.

The House and Senate bills will require effort and compromise on both sides. It's a difficult task. Yet the difficulty of this task is no excuse for avoiding it. The American people expect us to meet our responsibility and deliver immigration reform that fixes the problems in the current system, that upholds our ideals and provides a fair and practical way forward.

The United States Congress needs to pass a comprehensive bill, one that will accomplish five objectives. First, a comprehensive reform bill must help us secure our borders. The border should be open to trade and lawful immigration, and shut to illegal immigrants, as well as criminals, drug dealers and terrorists.

Since I became President, we've increased funding for border security by 66 percent. We've expanded the Border Patrol from about 9,000 to 12,000 agents. As I told the folks down there, David, in Yuma, I am proud of the Border Patrol, and so should the American people. Do you realize that over the past five years, the men and women of the Border Patrol, working under incredibly difficult circumstances, have apprehended and sent home about 6 million people entering this country illegally. There's some people working hard down there on our behalf.

Despite the progress, despite the fact that they've turned back 6 million people in five years, we don't have full control of this border. And I'm determined to change that. I called on Congress to provide funding for dramatic improvements in manpower and technology on the border. And so by the end of 2008, we'll increase the number of Border Patrol agents by an additional 6,000. In other words, we will have doubled the size of the Border Patrol during my presidency.

That's not going to be enough to do our job of securing the border. That's what you've got to understand. And so these Border Patrol agents need help. And the best way to help the Border Patrol is to construct high-tech fences in urban areas, urban corridors, to build patrol roads and barriers in rural areas. We're going to create a virtual fence that employs motion protectors and infrared cameras and unmanned aerial vehicles to detect and prevent illegal crossings. What I'm telling you is that we're going to have a border that is smart and secure.

And the best way to do that is to have Border Patrol agents, and then give them the most advanced technology so they can do their job. Training thousands of new Border Patrol agents and deploying the most advanced technology is going to take time. Yet, the need to secure this border is urgent. And so I'm acting. This month, National Guard units will deploy to the border to set up headquarters that will help coordinate Guard operations that will support the Border Patrol. In other words, we'll be training 6,000 additional agents, but in the meantime, I'm going to send 6,000 National Guard down there. These forces are the first of 6,000 members that are going to assist the Border Patrol. They're going to operate surveillance systems and analyze intelligence, and install fences and vehicle barriers, and build patrol roads and provide training. In other words, they're going to be a complement to the Border Patrol.

The Guard units will not be involved in direct law enforcement activities. That's the job of the Border Patrol. The United States is not going to militarize our border. What we're going to do is support those who we hire to do the job of enforcing the border.

As new Border Patrol agents and technologies come on line, the Guard forces are going to be reduced. The federal government is working to conclude formal agreements with California and Arizona and New Mexico and Texas that will define the roles and responsibilities of National Guard units deploying to the Southern border. We're going to work closely with the governors of those states to secure this border. Also in touch with the chief of the National Guard Bureau, General Blum, to make sure that we get those 6,000 Guard down there to help the Border Patrol do their job.

I also recognize the role of local and state enforcement authorities to help David and his people do the job. And so we'll increase federal funding for state and local authorities assisting our Border Patrol on targeted enforcement missions; as well, we're going to give specialized training to certain state and local folks so they can complement the Border Patrol.

One of the problems we have down there is we got people working hard to find people, and in some instances, they apprehend somebody, then they head right into our society. That's frustrating for the Border Patrol agents. We got people working long, long hours down there, and they catch somebody sneaking into our country, and they say, hey, go over here to this legal proceeding and, since the courts are full, just check back with us in 45 days. The problem is a lot of people who want to put food on the table, or want to do other things, don't check back. That's a program that needs to end.

See, most of the people we catch at the border trying to enter illegally are Mexicans, and 85 percent of them are sent right back home within 24 hours. But the real problem we've had is when we catch illegal immigrants from other countries trying to come in. It's easy to send people back into Mexico; it's hard to send somebody to a country south of Mexico, for example.

One of the problems we've had, we didn't have enough detention space. So we've got the Border Patrol agents working hard, they catch somebody from a country other than Mexico coming into our country and no place to put them. And so part of our strategy is to end catch-and-release by expanding the number of beds in detention facilities along the border. We've added some and we're going to add more. We're going to add enough to be able to end catch-and-release.

We've also expedited the legal process to cut the average deportation time. I've been in touch, as has my administration, with foreign governments where we tell them, you got to take your citizens back. When we catch one of your citizens coming in you have an obligation to take that person back into your society. We've ended catch-and-release for illegal immigrants from the key Central American countries; now Congress needs to provide additional funding and legal authority so we can end catch-and-release at the Southern border once and for all.

The strategy is this: We're going to enforce our border. When we catch you we're going to send you home -- so that the message is very clear, and that is, you're going to be sent home if we catch you illegally, which means don't try to come in the first place, illegally.

Second, in order to have a comprehensive reform bill, we have to have a temporary worker program. Part of securing this border is a temporary worker program. You see, there are people who will do anything to come into this country to work. That's what you got to understand. People are motivated by a desire in many cases -- in most cases, to support the family. I used to tell people in Texas, family values do not stop at the Rio Grande. And so, therefore, it shouldn't surprise you when people hike across the hot desert to -- and risking their lives to come and work, or are willing to get stuffed in the back of an 18-wheeler to come and do a job others won't do here in America.

The fact that people are willing to take those risks puts enormous pressure on our border, so much pressure that walls and patrols aren't going to stop it. In other words, you got people saying, I'll do anything to come and work, just give me a chance. And we can put up -- we can have a lot of patrols and a lot of walls, and it's not going to stop that flow. It will put a dent in it. But if the job is to secure this border, it seems like to me we got to stop the number of people who are trying to sneak across in the first place. And the best way to do that is to make a temporary worker program a part of immigration reform. The program would create a legal path for foreign workers to enter this country in an orderly way for a limited period of time. It would

match willing foreign workers with willing American employers for jobs Americans are not doing.

Every worker who applies for the program would be required to pass a criminal background check. Temporary workers must return to their homes at the conclusion of their stay. A temporary worker program would meet the legitimate needs of American employers, and it would give an honest immigrant a chance to contribute to our economy and at the same time provide for their families. A temporary worker program would reduce the appeal of human smugglers and make it less likely people would have to risk their lives to cross this border. A temporary worker program would ease the financial burden on state and local governments by replacing illegal workers with lawful taxpayers. And above all, the temporary worker program would add to the security of this country by making certain we know who is coming into this country and why they're here.

Third, a comprehensive reform bill must hold employers to account for the workers they hire. It is against the law to hire someone who is in this country illegally. Those are the laws of the United States of America, and they must be upheld.

To ensure our laws are enforced, we've increased funding for immigration enforcement inside this country by 42 percent since I took office. Last year, I signed a bill that doubled federal resources for work site enforcement. We've launched law enforcement task forces in 11 major cities to dismantle criminal rings that are producing fake documents. Not only do we have a whole industry that's evolved to smuggle people in -- you ever hear the word coyote? These are these folks that are willing to use human life as a commodity, to make money off of somebody. We've also got document forgers, too. See, there's a whole industry that's sprung as a result of enforcement -- an immigration system that isn't working. And so we're out to bust those document forgers.

Most American businesses want to abide by the law. Many are unable to determine whether their workers are legal, however, because of this document fraud. Today, there's an industry that's making these ID and fraudulent Social Security numbers. See, American employers who check these documents often discover that the names of their workers don't match their Social Security numbers. So then we've got people trying to verify, doing what they're expected to do under the law. But when this happens, the employer receives a "no match" letter from the Social Security Administration, yet under current law, the immigration enforcement agents at the Department of Homeland Security are not informed of these mismatches. The system isn't working.

See, we need to address problems and ensure that agents can enforce the law. Business owners should not have to act as detectives to verify the legal status of their workers. And so the federal government has the responsibility to ensure that businesses have a clear and reliable way to check work documents. We have that responsibility. If we expect people to adhere to the law that you're not supposed to hire somebody illegally, we have a responsibility here in Washington, D.C. to help you verify documents.

One thing we've done is we've launched what's called Basic Pilot. Basic Pilot is a voluntary online verification system that allows employers to confirm the eligibility of new hires by checking the information they provide against federal databases. If there's a mismatch, the applicant then has eight working days to contest the finding. By giving employers a quick and

practical way to verify Social Security numbers, Basic Pilot gives employers confidence that their workers are legal, improves the accuracy of wage and tax reporting, and helps ensure that those who obey our laws are not undercut by illegal workers.

Basic Pilot, just a while ago, was only available in six states; now it's nationwide. As I told you, the program is optional. The truth of the matter is, most employers do not participate. Now, the House and the Senate immigration bills would require employers to use Basic Pilot. I think this is sensible. I think if we want to enforce our laws, people ought to be required to check to see whether or not names and numbers match. Homeland Security, by the way, in order for it to work, needs more money to make sure that the program is up and running.

Now, the other thing we need to do besides good verification procedures is to develop a new identification card for every legal foreign worker. The card should be tamper-proof. It ought to use biometric technology such as digital fingerprints. We got the technology to do this. It makes sense to have somebody who's going to be here legally working on a temporary basis to have a card that will allow American employers to know that the foreign job applicant is who he or she says she is, or he is. A tamper-proof card is going to be a vital tool to enforce the law, and it's got to be a part of a comprehensive immigration reform package.

Improving enforcement for immigration laws also requires stiffening the penalties for those violating the laws. Today the fine for a business that fails to check an employee's ID can be as low as \$100. You might as well pay a speeding ticket. A penalty for knowingly hiring an illegal immigrant can be as low as \$250 and can't exceed \$2,000. These low penalties, frankly, provide little incentive for dishonest businesses to obey the law. And so we got to increase the penalties. If we want to be smart about work site enforcement, we got to say to somebody who's breaking the law, there's going to be a cost, and it's more than \$250. And so the fines need to be larger.

The whole point and purpose of what I've just described to you is to assure the American people that we've got a plan in place; that says to the employers, this is going to help you determine whether or not who you're hiring should be here in the first place. Secondly, it's going to help get rid of document fraud. I repeat, we don't want our employers becoming document experts. That's not their -- they're trying to get a job done.

And thirdly, we want to make sure that when we catch you, there's a consequence. You know, most American businesses are law-abiding. They really do want to uphold the law. They understand there's a responsibility to be an American, and that is to uphold the laws of the land. And yet, we've got to recognize there are some unscrupulous folks who want to take advantage of low-cost labor. Illegal workers can be paid less than the market rate, see. And guess what -- when you're illegal and you're worried about being detected, you can be exploited. And that's not the American way. We don't like people living in the shadows of our society. We're a nation of the rule of law, and we want people to be treated with respect. And so people who -- businesses that knowingly employ illegal workers undermine this law and undermine the spirit of America. And we're not going to tolerate it in this country.

Fourthly, a comprehensive reform bill has got to address the reality that millions of illegal immigrants are here already. Now, these folks should not be given an automatic path to citizenship. That is called amnesty. I oppose amnesty. I opposed amnesty because it would be

unfair to those people who are here lawfully, and I oppose amnesty because it would invite further waves of illegal immigrants.

One of the difficult tasks before the House and the Senate is deciding how American law will treat the illegal immigrants now in our country. Some members of Congress argue that no one who came to this country illegally should be allowed to continue living and working in our country, and that any plan that allows them to stay equals amnesty, no matter how many conditions we impose. Listen, I appreciate the members are acting on deeply felt principles. I understand that. Yet I also believe that the approach they suggest is wrong and unrealistic. There's a rational middle ground between granting an automatic path to citizenship for every illegal immigrant and a program that requires every illegal immigrant to leave. The middle ground recognizes there are differences between an illegal immigrant who crossed the border recently, and someone who has worked here for many years who's got a home, a family, and a clean record.

My position is clear: I believe that illegal immigrants who have roots in our country and who want to stay should have to pay a meaningful penalty for breaking the law, to pay their taxes, to learn English, and to work in a job for a number of years. People who meet these conditions should be eventually permitted to apply for citizenship like other foreign workers. But approval would not be automatic. They would have to wait in line behind those who played by the rules and followed the law. This isn't amnesty. It is a practical and reasonable way for those who have broken the law to pay their debt to society and demonstrate the character that makes a good citizen.

Fifth, a comprehensive bill must honor the great American tradition of the melting pot, which has made us one nation out of many peoples. This debate is an interesting debate. It gets quite emotional, and sometimes, an emotion -- in all the emotions, we forget we are a land of immigrants. Success of this country has depended and will depend upon helping newcomers assimilate into our society, and help folks embrace our common identity as Americans.

Americans are bound together by our shared ideals, an appreciation of our history, respect for the flag we fly, and an ability to speak and write the English language. As business owners and community leaders, you know that English is the key to unlocking the opportunity of America. See, English allows a newcomer to go from picking crops to opening a grocery store. English allows a newcomer from sweeping an office floor to running that office. English allows someone to go from a low-paying job to a diploma, a career, and home ownership. When immigrants assimilate and advance in our society, they realize their dreams. And as they do, they renew our spirit and they add to the unity of our country.

As the Chamber, you appreciate the great contributions immigrants have made to America's freedom and prosperity, and you know their importance for the future of this nation. And so you're helping this country reach consensus by conducting the debate on immigration in a reasoned and respectful tone. And I appreciate that a lot.

I urge our fellow citizens to understand that harsh language, unnecessary politics sends the wrong message about who we are as a nation. I appreciate the fact you're working for an immigration bill that is comprehensive. That makes a lot of sense because you know that all the elements of this problem must be addressed together, or none of them will be solved at all.

Throughout our long history, America has prospered because we welcome people who abided by our laws and worked hard and raised their families and trusted in the Almighty. I believe we must be guided by that history as we reform our immigration system. I trust in our country's genius for making us all Americans, one nation under God. And I'm confident that the United States Congress will do its duty and pass an immigration bill that secures our borders, strengthens our laws, and upholds the promise of the United States of America.

May God bless you all. (Applause.)

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Fact Sheet: Comprehensive Immigration Reform: Improving Worksite Enforcement

Today, President Bush Discussed His Plan For Comprehensive Immigration Reform. One of the most important tests of immigration reform will be the enforcement of our immigration laws in the interior of our country. The Administration is taking action to improve worksite enforcement - and expects businesses to help.

- **Congress Is Now Moving Forward With Legislation To Reform Our Immigration System.** The House started this debate by passing a bill that focuses on border security and interior enforcement. Now the Senate has passed a comprehensive bill that also includes a temporary worker program and a plan to resolve the status of illegal immigrants who are already in our country. Working out the differences between the House and Senate bills will require effort and compromise on both sides. Yet the difficulty of this task is no excuse for avoiding it.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Hold Employers To Account For The Workers They Hire

Funding For Immigration Enforcement Inside Our Country Has Increased By 42 Percent Since The President Took Office, And Last Year, The President Signed A Bill Doubling Federal Resources For Worksite Enforcement. We have also launched law enforcement task forces in 11 major cities to dismantle criminal rings that produce fake documents. All these efforts are helping us enforce our immigration laws at the worksite.

The Federal Government Has A Responsibility To Ensure That Businesses Have A Clear And Reliable Way To Check Work Documents. Today there is an entire underground industry dedicated to producing fake IDs and fraudulent Social Security numbers. Under current law, the immigration enforcement agents at the Department of Homeland Security are not informed when the Social Security Administration discovers a mismatch between a worker and the Social Security Number he or she provides. We need to address these problems and ensure that our agents can enforce the law.

- **Basic Pilot Is Helping Businesses Comply With The Law.** Basic Pilot is a voluntary, online verification system that allows employers to confirm the eligibility of new hires by checking the information they provide against Federal databases.
 - **When President Bush Took Office, Basic Pilot Was Available In Only Six States, And Today It Is Available Nationwide.** The President's FY 2007 budget requests \$111 million to expand Basic Pilot.
 - **Congress Needs To Make This Program Mandatory And Provide Homeland Security With The Funding And Authority To Make It Work.** Basic Pilot is still optional, and most employers do not participate. Both the House and Senate immigration bills would require employers to use Basic Pilot.
- **To Help Combat Document Fraud, President Bush Has Proposed The Creation Of A New Identification Card For Every Legal Foreign Worker.** This card should use biometric technology, such as digital fingerprints, to help make it tamper-proof. With a

tamper-proof card, American employers would know that a foreign job applicant is who he says he is - and is in our country legally. A tamper-proof card would be a vital tool to enforce the law, and it must be part of any comprehensive immigration reform.

- **Improving Enforcement Of Our Immigration Laws Also Requires Stiffening The Penalties For Violating Those Laws.** President Bush proposes to increase penalties for employers who violate the law - and to make fines even larger for employers who repeatedly violate the law.

American Businesses Have A Clear Responsibility To Obey The Law. Businesses that knowingly employ illegal workers are undermining our laws, violating the public trust, and contributing to the problem of illegal immigration - and the Administration will not tolerate it.

- **By Cracking Down On Document Fraud, The Administration Will Help Honest Employers Follow The Law And Will Punish Those Who Violate It.** With an effective verification system and a tamper-proof card, employers would have the tools they need to check the work status of job applicants, and there would be no excuse for hiring an illegal worker. And with an effective verification system and a tamper-proof card, illegal workers would have less incentive to cross the border in the first place.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Help Us Secure Our Borders

President Bush Has Called On Congress To Provide Funding For Dramatic Improvements In Manpower And Technology At The Border. Since the President took office, we have increased funding for border security by 66 percent, and expanded the Border Patrol from about 9,000 to 12,000 agents. By the end of 2008, we will increase the number of Border Patrol officers by an additional 6,000 - doubling the size of the Border Patrol since the President took office. At the same time, we will construct high-tech fences in urban corridors and build new patrol roads and barriers in rural areas. We will create a virtual fence that employs motion sensors, infrared cameras, and unmanned aerial vehicles to detect and prevent illegal crossings.

This Month, National Guard Units Will Deploy To The Border To Set Up The Headquarters That Will Help Coordinate Guard Operations In Support Of The Border Patrol. These forces are the first of up to 6,000 Guard members who will assist the Border Patrol by operating surveillance systems, analyzing intelligence, installing fences and vehicle barriers, building patrol roads, and providing training. Guard units will not be involved in direct law enforcement activities, and as new Border Patrol agents and new technologies come online, the number of Guard forces will be reduced.

- **The Federal Government Is Now Working To Conclude Formal Agreements With California, Arizona, New Mexico, And Texas That Will Define The Role And Responsibilities Of National Guard Units Deploying To The Southern Border.** President Bush will continue to work closely with the Governors of these States to secure our border. He has also spoken with the chief of the National Guard Bureau, Lieutenant General Steven Blum, about the work the Guard will be doing to improve border security.

We Will Increase Federal Funding For State And Local Authorities Assisting The Border Patrol On Targeted Enforcement Missions. We will give State and local authorities the specialized training they need to help Federal officers apprehend and detain illegal immigrants.

This will help during the period of transition as new Border Patrol agents and new technologies come online.

We Will End The Practice Of "Catch And Release" Along The Southern Border.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Create A Temporary Worker Program That Helps Us Secure The Border

A Temporary Worker Program Would Create A Legal Path For Foreign Workers To Enter Our Country In An Orderly Way, For A Limited Period Of Time. Above all, a temporary worker program would add to our security by making certain we know who is in our country and why they are here.

A Temporary Worker Program Would Meet The Legitimate Needs Of American Employers, And It Would Give Honest Immigrants A Way To Provide For Their Families While Respecting The Law.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Address The Reality That Millions Of Illegal Immigrants Are Here Already

The President Opposes Amnesty. Amnesty would be unfair to those who are here lawfully, and it would invite further waves of illegal immigration. There is a rational middle ground between granting an automatic path to citizenship for every illegal immigrant and a program that requires every illegal immigrant to leave.

The President Believes Illegal Immigrants Who Have Roots In Our Country And Want To Stay Should Have To Pay A Meaningful Penalty For Breaking The Law, Pay Their Taxes, Learn English, And Work In A Job For A Number Of Years. People who meet these conditions should eventually be permitted to apply for citizenship like other foreign workers, but approval would not be automatic - and they will have to wait in line behind those who played by the rules and followed the law.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Honor The Great American Tradition Of The Melting Pot

The Success Of Our Country Depends Upon Helping Newcomers Assimilate Into Our Society And Embrace Our Common Identity As Americans. When immigrants assimilate and advance in our society, they realize their dreams, they renew our spirit, and they add to the unity of America.

English Is The Key To Unlocking The Opportunity Of America. English allows newcomers to go from picking crops to opening a grocery, from cleaning offices to running offices, from a life of low-paying jobs to a diploma, a career, and a home of their own.

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President's Remarks to the Travel Pool at Laredo Border Patrol Sector Headquarters

Laredo Border Patrol Sector Headquarters
Laredo, Texas

3:23 P.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: It's good to be in my home state with my home governor. Governor Perry understands, like I understand, the need to enforce this border. He also understands what I understand -- that in order to do so we've got to have a comprehensive plan.

I started my day earlier in New Mexico, where I saw the training facility that is going to put out enough Border Patrol to be able to tell the American people we will have doubled the Border Patrol since 2001. That's a really important part of our strategy, to train more Border Patrol agents to help those that are working hard already to do their job. But we need to make the border technologically advanced as well.

We just saw some of the remote cameras that are in place that will help the Border Patrol be able to do its job better. But more than that, we've got to have a comprehensive approach, and that includes a temporary worker plan that says you can come and do a job Americans aren't doing if you pass a criminal background check, for a period of time. And then once you finish that time, you go home.

We also have got to make sure that we deal with the problem of people who have been here for a long period of time. Some people say, throw them out of the country. That doesn't make any sense. You just can't throw them out of the country. Others say, give them amnesty -- and that doesn't make any sense. And the reason why giving them automatic citizenship doesn't make any sense, it will encourage others to come. So what we ought to do is say to somebody who's been here for a while, if you pass a background check, a criminal background check, you've shown that you've worked here for a while, you paid a penalty -- that you can apply for citizenship, but you get at the back of the line, the citizenship line, not at the front.

A comprehensive plan is necessary to help these good folks do their job. And I'm going to keep calling on Congress to think about a comprehensive plan. We agree on a lot of stuff. A lot of the elements of this plan have got common agreement. Now it's time for folks to set aside politics and get the job done on behalf of the American people.

Nedra, have you got a question?

Q Yes, sir. Can you respond to Iran's initial reaction to the incentives package today?

THE PRESIDENT: Why don't you tell me what it was?

Q Well, the top negotiator said --

THE PRESIDENT: You know I've been in Artesia?

Q Right. I was. But the top negotiator said that the package contained positive steps, but there were some ambiguities, but the talks were constructive.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that's positive. I want to solve this issue with Iran diplomatically. And I think that -- I appreciate Javier Solana carrying a message to the Iranians that America, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany -- the main group of negotiators -- wants this problem to be solved. And so we will see if the Iranians take our offer seriously.

The choice is theirs to make. I have said the United States will come and sit down at the table with them, so long as they're willing to suspend their enrichment in a verifiable way. Sounds like a positive response to me.

Steve.

Q Sir. In Somalia, sir, it appears to have fallen to Islamic militants. Is there a need for international peacekeepers there? What do you think has happened there?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I talked to Secretary of State Rice about this subject yesterday. And, obviously, when there's instability anywhere in the world, we're concerned. There is instability in Somalia. The first concern, of course, would be to make sure that Somalia does not become an al Qaeda safe haven, that it doesn't become a place from which terrorists can plot and plan. So we're watching very carefully the developments there and we will strategize more when I get back to Washington as how to best respond to the latest incident there in Somalia.

Yes.

Q President Bush --

THE PRESIDENT: Where are you from, here?

Q Laredo Morning Times.

THE PRESIDENT: It's nice to be back here.

Q Very nice to meet you, too.

THE PRESIDENT: Rick and I were talking about the first time I came here after I had won governor -- he had already been in office for a while -- the Washington Day Parade, and I remember it fondly. It's good to be back in Laredo.

Q It's good to have you here, sir. Are you all -- are you hoping to -- a lot of people say that the answer for immigration is to -- well, one group is saying that the quotas need to be raised for the amount of legal documented workers that can come in. Is that part of your proposal?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the framework I've outlined recognizes that Congress has got the right to regulate what they call green cards. And if Congress thinks that the line for citizens from Mexico is too long, they can increase the number of green cards. If they think it's -- or they can shorten -- increase the number of green cards. If they think it's too short, they can eliminate the number of green cards. In other words, they can control the flow of people from a particular part of the country.

What I want is people who have been here for a while to be able to have the choice -- if they pay a fine; if they learn the English language; if they've proven they worked; to be able to get in the citizenship -- in the potential citizenship line -- but at the back of it. See, they don't get to be in the front. The people who have been here legally are in the front of the line. They get to wait in line. And if Congress wants to shorten the line, they increase the number of green cards.

Q And I guess for those that haven't been here that long, do you favor deportation of those?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I believe that -- as I've said in my remarks, that there ought to be a difference between those folks who have been here for a period of time -- like for those who own a home or have got a family established, or have had a job for a long period of time -- and those who have arrived recently. Those people ought to be given a temporary worker card for a limited period of time. And when the time is up, they need to go home. That's what a temporary worker is -- it's not a permanent worker card, it's a temporary worker card.

And Congress needs to determine the length -- the proper length of time. Right now one consideration is three years with a three year renewal. And what that will do is that will help people who are looking for somebody to do a job Americans aren't doing find workers. It'll also mean that somebody doesn't have to sneak across the border. We've got Border Patrol agents chasing down people who are trying to sneak across and do work Americans aren't doing. So it seems like it makes sense to me to -- "here, you can come to our country on a temporary basis, to do a job, and when the time is up you get to go home." That's how you enforce the border. You enforce the border with more Border Patrol agents, better technology and a rational way to treat people who are coming here to do work Americans aren't doing.

That's one of the reasons I've come down here to Laredo, as well as Artesia, is I want to talk to these Border Patrol agents. And I want to assure them that we're listening to what they need to get their job done. Our job in government is to say to people who are risking their lives and working hard is, what do you need to get the job done. And that's why I've been coming down here and we'll keep coming down here. And Congress needs to get a bill done.

Yes, sir.

Q Mr. President, you spoke about progress earlier today in Artesia. You said that you feel it's progress that both the Senate and the House have both taken up the issue of immigration. What concrete progress can you point to, in terms of winning over the conservatives in your party who still stand pretty firmly against the idea of any path to citizenship for immigrants?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, one thing is it's conceivable you could have been asking me how come you can't get any chamber in Congress to pass a bill. And so progress -- what I'm telling the American people is, is that from last fall to now we've got two bills out there. That's progress.

What else is progress is a common understanding, one, we've got to enforce the border; two, that people need to be treated with respect; three, that there needs to be assimilation; four, that we need to hold employers who break the law to account; five, there needs to be some way to deal with people who are here to work on a temporary basis; and, six, ultimately, we're going to have to do something about people who've been here for a long period of time. In other words, people understand those are the principles that we've got to work on.

There's no question this is a difficult issue for some in Washington, D.C. But my job is to continue calling people to account and say we've got to work together to get a bill done. And one way to do it is to come right down here on the front lines of border enforcement and say to the United States Congress: There are people working hard on behalf of this country and we owe them a comprehensive piece of legislation so they can do their job. And I'm going to keep doing it.

Yes, ma'am. Where are you from?

Q ABC News.

THE PRESIDENT: ABC News? I suggest getting a little sun screen.

Q I know. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: I'm always looking out for my fellow citizens. (Laughter.)

Q Thank you. Last summer you set a deadline for Congress before their August recess to pass things like the energy bill. Are you going to put such a deadline on an immigration bill --

THE PRESIDENT: My attitude is, is that in order for these people to be doing their job they need a bill as soon as possible. I'm looking forward to getting that conference, seeing the conference get together. You know, people -- there are people making statements, and that's important for people to set out there, say things and kind of set their markers. The conferences have a way of working things out. And I'm going to be continuing to urge people to work things out in conference.

They haven't yet sat down as a conference yet, but they will pretty soon. And that will give us a pretty good feel for whether or not attitudes are hardened to the point nothing can get done. I don't think so. I think the people want something done in America. If you look at the -- you know what people are saying, they're saying let's get something done in a comprehensive way. And I believe we can get something done. No question it's hard work, but that's all the more reason to work hard to get it done. I recognize some people in Washington would rather duck the hard issue, but that's not the way I am and that's not the way most people in Congress are. They want to get the job done, so we should keep working on it.

Okay, thank you all -- unless you want to stand out here a little longer. (Laughter.) You're back again.

Q Mr. President, I'm sorry, one last question.

THE PRESIDENT: That's fine. I'm glad to be working with the local press.

Q Thank you so much. Some people say that Mexico needs to do a whole lot more to just create more jobs that pay a more decent wage for its people, and that America should help Mexico by investing more or providing more development funds. Is that -- what do you think about that, and do you have any kind of proposals for that?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the people that say that the long-term solution to immigration is for people to be able to find work in Mexico -- they're right. And that's why I've been a strong supporter of NAFTA.

One of the interesting things about the border here that I don't think a lot of Americans are aware, but I know those of us who grew up in Texas are aware of it, is that this part of the world used to be really poor. Up and down the Rio Grande Valley there was a lot of impoverished people. Laredo is a booming town -- I mean, it's thriving, it has really changed a lot. And one of the main reasons why is because of trade with Mexico. On the other side of the border, the border states are prosperous states.

So to answer your question, the first thing is to promote free and fair trade between Mexico and the United States. Trade enhances wealth and provides opportunities for people.

The problem is in Mexico is that the opportunities you can find here on the border don't extend to the south of the country. And so, therefore, a lot of the Mexicans that we're finding at the border are people coming up from the south trying to find work so they can put food on the table. And I've talked to President Fox about this very issue. And I know Rick has talked to President Fox about this issue. And that is, what more can we do with Mexico to encourage economic development south of the northern tier states.

President Fox, the last time I saw him, said that there are 100,000 vacant jobs in northern Mexican states. I think that's really interesting. And I said, what are we going to do about it? And the issue is education. The issue is to make sure that people in the interior and the south of the country have got enough education, enough skills so they can fill those 100,000 jobs.

So to answer your question, economic development works through free and fair trade, as well as helping put an education system in place that makes sense. And that's Mexico's responsibility; that's their job. But we can help and we work with Mexico all the time. I know Texas has got all kinds of collaborative programs with Mexico to help their education system.

Yes, Steve. Are you enjoying the heat? (Laughter.)

Q It's not so bad.

THE PRESIDENT: Because you've got a fine looking hat on there. (Laughter.)

Q Thanks, sir. The word "amnesty," the critics seem to be able to just label this an amnesty and get away with it. I mean, are you having trouble fighting back that impression? Is it sinking in to people that this isn't amnesty and it's --

THE PRESIDENT: Look, if you're one of these types of people that basically say, you know, throw them out -- then you just use the word "amnesty," just toss it around. You know, amnesty is something nobody is for in America. I'm not for it. But in order to frighten people, you just say the word "amnesty."

On the other hand, you can't kick people out of this country. You can stop people from coming in, but there have been people here in this part of the world, for example, been here for a decade -- honest, hard-working citizens doing jobs Americans aren't doing, providing for their families,

they own their home. And the fundamental question is, how do you treat them with respect and, at the same time, have a system that's fair and orderly and respects our laws.

So my attitude is on that, if a person wants to apply for a citizenship they've got to pay a fine first -- they have broken the laws of the United States and they need to pay a fine. Then they've got to prove they've got a clean criminal record, paid there taxes and work. And then they can apply for citizenship, but they're at the back of the line. See, there's a line of people waiting to become a citizen, and they need to get at the back of the line, not at the front of the line. And that's how I think we can have an orderly system. That's not amnesty.

Amnesty is: okay, everybody who is here, you're a citizen. That's amnesty. And I'm not for that. I think it would be a mistake. And I recognize some people are for that. The reason I think it's a mistake is that, one, there are people who played by the rules here in America, law abiding citizens who applied for citizenship, who are in line to become a citizen. They've adhered to all our laws; they're here legally; and they're in line and they ought to be at the head of the line. And if you say to somebody who has been here illegally, "you're an automatic citizen," then that means they're not the head of the line, it means somebody jumped in front of them who had broken our laws.

Secondly, if people are granted amnesty -- in other words, the government would say "you're automatically a citizen," there's going to be another 8 million people trying to get in this country because a lot of people want to be citizens of the United States. It's a great honor to be a citizen of this country. It's a great tribute to our country, by the way, that people are willing to come here to work and to live. We're the land of the free, we're the land of the opportunity. And, yet, we've got to control our border. So therefore to say to some group of people "you're an automatic citizen" would increase the likelihood of a lot of other people trying to come back in here so they can become a citizen automatically. And, therefore, I'm against amnesty.

And I understand words in politics and words trying to frighten people. But the comprehensive approach I've outlined, when people think about it, makes a lot of sense and you can't -- all five need to go together in order to be able to do the job of enforcing the border.

I've enjoyed this, and I hope you have.

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President Discusses Border Security and Comprehensive Immigration Reform, Participates in Swearing-In Ceremony for CBP Commissioner

Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
Artesia, New Mexico

10:45 A.M. MDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all. Please be seated. (Applause.) Pete, thanks for your kind words and thanks for your leadership. New Mexico has got a fine senior Senator in Pete Domenici. All he talks about is New Mexico when I'm with him. (Applause.) Now I'm afraid all he's going to talk about is FLETC. (Laughter.)

It's good to be in Artesia. Some people probably think I've never heard of Artesia. You forgot I grew up in Midland. Home of the Mighty Bulldogs, Artesia is. (Applause.) The land where the sky is big and the people are friendly. I knew I was in pretty good country when I saw all the cowboy hats, and I think I saw one guy spitting in a can. (Laughter.) But I'm thrilled to be here, I really am, and I appreciate a chance to be here at the Border Patrol Academy, here at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

I want to -- the reason I'm here is because I want the country to pay attention to what you're doing. And I want you to understand, those of you who are training to become Border Patrol agents, and those of you who are training the trainees, I want you to understand that I really appreciate your contribution to the United States of America, and so do the American people. (Applause.)

What you're learning to do here is important. It's important for the security of our nation. And I want to thank you for volunteering. At this academy new agents undergo 19 weeks of training, and by the looks of it, it isn't all that easy. It's practical experience. It's the kind of experience that's going to put you in pretty good stead when it comes to doing the job that we expect you to do.

You're taking courses in counterterrorism and immigration law. You're taking courses in anti-drug trafficking and firearms. You're taking courses in motor vehicle operations. And for those of you who don't know how to speak Spanish, you're learning how to speak Spanish. Those are all very important parts of your training.

Look, I'm not here to give you a lecture, but I am here to thank you. I want to appreciate what you're doing, I appreciate your service. I look forward to seeing you out there on the border doing the job we expect you to do. And in a little while, I'm going to tell you, you expect something from us, too. But the first thing you can expect is the full support of the federal government, and you have it. (Applause.)

I appreciate -- Pete Domenici is keeping pretty good company today, with Senator Jeff Bingaman. It's good to see the Senator. Thanks for coming. I'm proud you're here, as well. (Applause.) I flew down with two members of the United States Congress, Congressman Tom Udall -- he's from the northern part of the state -- and Congressman Steve Pearce -- he's here from the eastern part of New Mexico. It's good to see you all. (Applause.) Pearce has got that

umbrella up -- (laughter) -- because he's bald-headed. (Laughter.) He's also a fine Congressman. (Laughter.)

I want to thank the Governor of the great state of New Mexico, Governor Bill Richardson. Governor, I'm proud you're here. Thank you for taking the time. (Applause.) I know what it's like to be the governor of a border state. And I know Governor Richardson counts on the federal government to pass a good piece of legislation that will enable him and the people of this state who are working with you to do their jobs. And I'm proud you're on the lead of comprehensive immigration reform, Bill.

I want to thank Secretary Mike Chertoff for joining us. I want to thank other members of my administration, starting with Ralph Basham, who is the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and his wife, Judy. We're fixing to swear Ralph in. Part of this ceremony is for you to witness the swearing-in of your boss. I think that's a good way for us to make it clear that those of us who are in Washington, D.C. -- in my case, on a temporary basis, I want to emphasize -- (laughter) -- we know you're out here, see, and we care about the job you're doing. I thought it made sense to swear in the new commissioner in your presence, as a way of making it clear -- (applause) -- as a way of making it clear for us to say, he may have an office in Washington, but his heart is right here with the Border Patrol agents.

I appreciate very much Connie Patrick, who's the Director of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. I want to thank David Aguilar. He's the Chief of the Border Patrol. For those of you fixing to join the Border Patrol, you need to know you've got a chief who knows what he's talking about. See, he did exactly what you've done. (Applause.) Plus, he's a Texan. (Laughter.) I appreciate Jay Ahern -- he's Assistant Commissioner of Field Operations for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

I just had a tour given to me by Charlie Whitmire. Maybe you've heard of Charlie. (Laughter.) He's a no-nonsense kind of guy. See, he's the kind of guy you want running a facility like this. He's got one thing in mind, and that is to give you the tools necessary to do the job. Whitmire, I appreciate your service and thanks for your leadership. Thanks for the tour. (Applause.)

I appreciate all the state and local officials who have taken time out of your day to come and say hello, and I particularly want to thank the Mayor, Manuel Madrid, for being here, as well. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. Proud you're here. Thanks for your time. (Applause.)

Most of all, I want to thank you all, and I want you to thank your families, on behalf of a grateful nation. You need to tell your wives and children, mothers and fathers how much we appreciate what you're doing. So you've got my permission to take a little time off this afternoon -- (laughter) -- and let them know. This is a family deal. You're here training for a very important mission, a mission that's sometimes dangerous. And I understand how important it is to have the support of somebody in your house.

See, I got support from a great lady, too, like many of you who are married. I'm fortunate to be married to Laura Bush who sends her very -- (applause.) She sends her best to all the good folks out here in eastern New Mexico. Her mother is living right across the border, so we stay in touch with how people are thinking out here.

And it's -- I can't tell you how -- a joy it is to be out here where the air is dry and fresh, and the people are down-to-earth and decent, people who love our country, and people who expect us to handle this immigration debate with dignity and to get something done. That's what they expect. The people of Artesia want something done on the immigration issue, and the people all across our country want something done on this important issue. So I want to talk to you today about the debate we're having in Washington, D.C.

The first thing is illegal immigration is a serious problem. The first thing we got to understand as a country is that illegal immigration undermines the rule of law. It creates an underground economy. It can danger [sic] our national security. And therefore, we need to do something about it.

Illegal immigration makes it tough on local communities. It puts a strain on public schools and strains state and local budgets, brings crime to some of our communities. And we need to do something about it.

We've also got to remember this, though, during this debate, that illegal immigration is a problem, but we need to remember that immigrants have been one of the great strengths of the United States of America. For generations immigrants to this country have risked everything because of the dream of freedom. And they've assimilated into our society. And they've contributed to our economy. And they've contributed to the greatness of America. During this debate, this important debate on illegal immigration, we've got to remember we're a land of immigrants, and therefore, conduct this debate with dignity.

The United States is a nation of laws, and we're going to enforce our laws. We're also a nation of immigrants and we're going to uphold that tradition. And these are not contradictory goals. America can be a lawful society, and America will be a welcoming society at the same time.

So I'm going to work with Congress to fix our immigration problems, and I'm going to work with Congress to pass a comprehensive bill I can pass into law. And we're making progress. I know you're following the debate in Washington, but we're making progress toward a comprehensive bill.

When I visited the border last fall, Congress was still debating whether to take any action at all. See, last fall there was a doubt as to whether or not Congress was going to act on the immigration bill. The last time I visited the border last month, the House had passed a bill, focusing on border security and interior enforcement. Now the Senate has passed a bill, and it's a more comprehensive approach that includes a temporary worker program and a plan to resolve the status of illegal immigrants inside our country. And the next step is for the House and the Senate to reconcile its difference and agree on legislation that both houses can agree on. And I believe that legislation needs to be comprehensive in nature, which I'm going to talk about here in a minute.

I know when you watch your television or listen to the radio it seems like there's nothing but disagreement on immigration policy in Washington. Yet there's a growing consensus among all parties and all regions of the country that fundamental reforms are needed. In other words, people are coming to the conclusion we got to do something about a system that isn't working. And while the differences grab the headlines, the similarities in approaches are striking.

We all agree we need to control our borders. There's a common agreement that the federal government has a responsibility to control the borders, so that every illegal immigrant caught at the border needs to be sent home. We agree with that. Secondly, we agree that the government needs to crack down on businesses that hire illegal workers. In other words, in order to help you do your job, we all agree that if someone is hiring somebody who is an illegal immigrant, they've broken the law, and we need to crack down on that.

We all agree we must reduce the incentives for foreign workers to cross the border illegally. See, there's agreement on that in Washington. We agree that it's unacceptable to have millions of illegal immigrants living in our country beyond the reach of law and the protection of the law. And we all agree that immigrants to America must assimilate into our society. They must embrace our values and learn to speak the English language. See, there's common agreement. There's a consensus. And we need to act on that broad consensus and deliver comprehensive reform that makes our system, orderly, secure and fair.

We all agree we've got to enforce the borders. Since 2001, I've worked with the United States Congress to increase border security funding by 66 percent. I want to thank the members of Congress for working on that. (Applause.) Border Patrol has been expanded from about 9,000 agents to 12,000 agents. And we're building new infrastructures on the border.

Federal agents like you have apprehended and sent home about 6 million people entering America illegally since 2001. It's an amazing statistic, isn't it? Most American people have no earthly idea how hard our Border Patrol agents are working. Six million people since 2001 have been caught trying to come into this country illegally and sent home. And that's why I tell you I'm grateful for your hard work. People are doing an outstanding job.

But we got to make sure that we give you more to secure the border. Congress needs to fund dramatic increases in manpower and additional technology that will help you build on the successes. See, there's more work to be done. We're going to increase the size of the Border Patrol by additional 6,000 agents by the end of 2008. You're going to be busy here at this facility. See, our goal is to have doubled the Border Patrol to about 18,000 Border Patrol agents. That's what they tell me is going to work. I said, fine, get it done. And your classes here are part of that doubling of the Border Patrol. And when these agents that are trained here are deploying, we're going to give them what's necessary in terms of technology to be able to do their jobs.

See, we need to add new technologies to the new manpower we're training so we can tell the American people we're doing our best we possibly can to secure our border. Americans expect us to secure the border. It's an important job of the federal government. And so we're going to double your size, and we're going to get you new technologies.

We're going to build high-tech fences in urban corridors. For the agents here who've been on the front lines of enforcing our border, you understand how important those high-tech fences are so you can do that job. We're going to make sure you got new patrol roads. We can't ask these new Border Patrol agents that we're training to do their job and not have adequate patrol roads to be able to go up and down the border. We're going to build virtual fence that employs motion detectors and infrared cameras and unmanned aerial vehicles to prevent illegal crossings. See, we're going to leverage technology so you can better do your job.

Proposals to boost manpower and upgrade technologies have the support of Republicans and Democrats in the House and the Senate. In other words, there's consensus on that. We're going to get this part of the job done. And I understand and you understand it takes time to get technology and Border Patrol agents in place.

The training you do here takes 19 weeks, as it should. We don't want to rush you through the academy. See, when we put you on the front line of doing your job we want you to be as well-trained as you possibly can be. That's what your families expect, that's what your government expects, and that's what your trainers want. They want to use their skills to give you the skills necessary to do the job.

But it takes the time, and yet, we don't have time to get this border enforced. And so, therefore, I decided to work with our state governors, Republicans and Democrats, to move 6,000 National Guard troops on the border to help the current Border Patrol do the job until the new agents are trained. That makes sense to me, doesn't it? If we've got a problem, let's address it square on. And if part of the problem is we're waiting to get new Border Patrol agents trained and we can't wait, let's move some troops in -- National Guard troops that will be able to help those of you on the front lines of securing our border do your job better.

Guard members are arriving at the border and they're going to set up a headquarters to support Border Patrol operations. You see, you notice I said "support the Border Patrol." The Border Patrol is in the lead -- that's why they're going through significant training. The Border Patrol is the primary law enforcement agency on the border. And so the Guard units are down there to support your job; they're to make it easier for you to do your job. Our Guard units will not be involved in direct law enforcement activities. That's not what they're going to go down there for. The United States of America will not militarize our border. We're going to make sure that the Border Patrol is the -- is directly involved in law enforcement activities. That's what you're trained to do. The Guard is going to free up Border Patrol to focus on stopping illegal immigrants coming in. They're going to be building the roads, and they're going to be doing the support.

When I was down in Yuma, I saw the Guard working side-by-side with Border Patrol, and what they're doing is they're freeing up the Border Patrol to be on the front lines. And I want to thank Governor Richardson and Governor Perry and Governor Schwarzenegger, Governor Napolitano for working with the federal government to prepare the way for the arrival of the Guard troops. And as soon as you get the Border Patrol agents trained, these Guard troops will be going home. But until that time, I want them down here helping you do the job that the American people expect us to do.

We've got to stop catch and release. Perhaps the people of Artesia, New Mexico know what I'm talking about; a lot of Americans don't. What happens is, these Border Patrol agents work hard, they find somebody coming back -- coming into our country; they say, the rules say you check in with the officer here, in the court, come back in about 20 days when we've got time for you to show up -- and they don't show up. So you've got somebody working hard to find somebody, and we let them back out in society, and guess what -- they disappear. And we're going to end that practice.

Eighty-five percent of the illegal immigrants caught crossing the border are Mexican citizens, so they get sent back quickly. Within 24 hours they're sent back across the country, and that's

important for people to know -- if you get caught, you get sent home. It means it's less likely you're going to try to come in the first place.

Unfortunately, it wasn't that easy to send home illegal immigrants from other countries, Central American countries, for example, and so they were released back into our society. It had to be frustrating for you Border Patrol agents who were on the front lines. You work hard, you find somebody who is trying to sneak in from Central America, you do your job; next thing you know you hear, oops, they're somewhere in society. So we're going to end that practice.

And the way you end it is, you build more detention facilities. See, part of the problem was we didn't have a place to hold these folks. And so now I'm working with Congress to increase the number of detention facilities along our borders, to make sure that when we catch somebody from a place other than Mexico, there's a place to hold them until such time as we send them back to their country.

I'm also talking to leaders of those countries from which these people are coming, and I'm saying, you have a responsibility to take them back as quickly as possible. And our mission is to end catch and release once and for all on the southern border of the United States, and we intend to do just that. (Applause.)

In order to make sure this Border Patrol strategy works, this strategy of securing the border, we all agree in Washington that employers must be held to account for the workers they hire. I spoke to the Chamber of Commerce last week, and I made it clear that the United States is not going to tolerate employers who violate our immigration laws. See, it's against the law to hire someone who is here illegally. That's what the law says. We're a nation of laws, and we expect people to abide by the laws. Most businesses want to comply with the law; they really do. Most people are good, law-abiding citizens who want to comply, but they have trouble verifying the legal status of their employees because of widespread problem of fake IDs and fraudulent Social Security numbers. See, there's a problem here. We got people sneaking into our country, and there's a whole document forgery ring supplying them with fake documents. And it's hard to expect some small business person in Artesia, New Mexico to be in a position to be a document checker.

And the federal government can help. So we're working on an effective system for verifying work eligibility so the businesses can better comply with the law, and then we'll be in a position to say, if you don't comply with the law you deserve to be punished. If we catch you cheating right now, you'll be punished. But we got to make sure that small businesses and large businesses have got the capacity to verify whether a person is here legally or not.

Congress needs to give federal agents the authority they need to enforce the law when job applicants submit fraudulent Social Security numbers. Congress needs to make it mandatory for employers to check information provided by job applicants against federal databases. Right now it's voluntary. In other words, you getting ready to hire somebody, you need to check against the federal database to make sure the numbers on the cards aren't forged, are real. But what really Congress needs to do is to use a biometric technology to create a new tamper-proof identification card for every legal foreign worker. That's what we need. We need a tamper-proof card. It says, if you're here legally working, here's your card, and you got to show it. And the business owner has got to call for it. And if they hire somebody without the tamper-proof card, they're in violation of the law and will be fined.

We've got to reduce the incentives for foreign workers to sneak across the border. That's what we agree on in Washington. If I were a Border Patrol agent, I'd be asking, what are you trying to do about the people trying to sneak in here to work. How come -- how come you don't have a temporary way for them to come work on the jobs Americans aren't doing? See, I believe that we need to understand that there are people coming across this border to put food on the table for their family, and they'll do anything to make it into America to do work. That's what you got to understand. A lot of people in Artesia, New Mexico know what I'm talking about. There are people coming to do work Americans aren't doing. They're working in the dairy farms, they're working the crops, they're laying tile, they're putting roof on in August.

And, therefore, it seems like to me if we want to protect this border, we ought to recognize they're coming and give them a temporary worker card. They can come if they pass a criminal background check for a limited period of time, and after they do their time, they go back home.

If you want to secure this border, you got to make it so people don't feel like they got to sneak across the border. The people these people catch are coming into this country to do jobs. We ought to recognize that and say, here is a legal way for you to come on a temporary basis for jobs that Americans aren't doing. And when you finish your time, when your time is up with the temporary worker card, you go back home. And one way to secure that border is to have people not trying to sneak across the border; is to give them a chance to come here legally on a temporary basis.

You know, I was out in Yuma, and they were describing one of the techniques for people coming here to work. You got a couple of Border Patrol agents out on a part of the world -- a part of the road there, and a hundred people rush them, a hundred people coming to do work rush right across the border, and you got three agents trying to stop them. And it's impossible. So the way to stop them is to do what we're doing out there: Add Border Patrol agents, add new double-fencing in that part of the border. But it seems like to me it's logical to say, you can come over, you don't need to rush the Border Patrol. Just come over here in a legal way, if you pass a background check, for a temporary period of time, and do work Americans aren't doing. That's called a temporary worker plan. And, in my judgment, any comprehensive bill that will work requires a temporary worker plan.

We all agree we've got to resolve the status of millions of illegal immigrants who are here already. And this is the toughest part of the bill for the Congress. Now, I believe there's widespread agreement that we should not have an automatic path to citizenship, which is called amnesty. I'm against amnesty. I'm against amnesty because it's unfair to those people who are standing in line to become a citizen and who have been here lawfully, and I'm against amnesty because I think if you grant amnesty it invites a further wave of illegal immigrants to try to come in this country. So whatever plan we do should not be viewed as amnesty.

In other words, some say, well, the way to solve this problem is to say, you're here, you're automatically a citizen. I disagree strongly with that. Now, there is a debate and honest disagreement who believe that immigration policy should force every illegal immigrant to return home for good. That's what some people in Washington think. And, obviously, there are those at the other end who believe that every illegal immigrant should be granted automatic citizenship. Neither of those plans are going to work. I just described why one wouldn't work. And trying to

find 10 million people who have been here for a long period of time, and rout them out of our society and send them home is just impractical. It may sound good; it's not going to work.

Our job is to put something on paper that will work, so these Border Patrol agents can get their job done. Our job is to be practical and to use common sense. And so here's a common sense middle ground between those two polarized positions. First of all, we've got to recognize that people who -- the difference between people who have been here for a while, and people here, newly arrived. Those who have been here newly arrived ought to be given a temporary worker card, and they work their time and go home.

But we've got to recognize that there are people who have been here for years, and they've got a home and a clean record, and they've been paying taxes. And so I believe if they want to stay here, that they ought to pay a fine, first and foremost. They've broken our law, and they ought to pay a fine for breaking the law. Secondly, I believe they've got to pay taxes, and make sure that they pay their taxes. Thirdly, I believe they ought to speak English. And fourthly, I believe they have to prove they've been working for a job for a number of years. In other words, there's a consequence. And then -- and then -- they can apply for citizenship, but they don't get at the head of the line, they get in the back of the line. You get behind the people who have been here legally.

In other words, you've got somebody who has been here for a while, they've been a good citizen, they've been working hard, and they pay a penalty for being here illegally. But if they want to choose to be a citizen, they get behind those people who have been here legally and who haven't broken the law. And if Congress is worried about the number of people getting in, they can decrease the number of green cards. You can control the size of the line by the number of green cards you issue. If you want a longer line for people, issue fewer green cards. If you want to shorten the line, issue more green cards. But here is a rational way to make sure that we treat people with dignity without granting automatic citizenship, which is called amnesty.

And finally, whatever our views on the issue, we've got to agree that we've got to uphold the great American tradition of the melting pot. You know, we are one nation, under God, for a reason, and that is because we appreciate our history and we share ideals, we respect the flag we fly, and we're bound together by a common language.

I believe English is the key to unlocking opportunity in America. It's been what it takes to help somebody go from picking crops to owning a grocery store, or from cleaning the floors of an office building to running that office. It's what we call assimilation, as part of assimilating to be Americans. When immigrants assimilate into this society, they realize their dreams. A lot of people have come here to this country over the decades with a dream, some of them just as simple as, I'd like to own my own house, or, I want to work hard so my child can go to college.

I'll never forget being the governor of Texas and going to schools like UTEP, University of Texas at El Paso. One of the most amazing parts of that ceremony is when the President of the university stood up and she said, how many of you are first-generation graduates from college, and you see the students -- a lot of them stood up. And you see their proud parents who've worked all their life to help a child go to college. There's something about America where people can work hard and realize dreams that has, I think, made us a unique nation. And as we go through this debate, we've got to understand that people who have dreams and work hard to

achieve those dreams renews the spirit of the country, give us a uniqueness, and the capacity to say we're all Americans.

So here are the elements for a comprehensive immigration bill -- and I believe strongly this, that if we don't address all the elements together, none of it is going to be solved at all. The reason I called for a comprehensive bill is because I understand that in order for these good folks to do their job, we've got to link all five aspects together. We've got to be realistic about what it takes to enforce the border. So I look forward to working with Congress on this important issue.

I'll make you this pledge: My tone in this debate is going to be respectful. The language I use in this debate is going to remember the values and ideals of America. The language I use in this debate is to remember we're from different backgrounds, different religions, different cultures, but ultimately we're united under the great ideals of the United States of America. (Applause.) And I expect everybody else in this debate to carry that same tone, as well.

And so I want to thank you for giving me a chance to share my thoughts with you. I feel passionately about this issue. I feel like one reason the people send us to Washington, D.C. is to solve difficult problems. That's what you send us to do. You didn't send us up there to kind of shove them aside and hope that they go away. This one is not going away. This one needs to be solved right now.

And I also came to thank those who are getting ready to serve the Border Patrol for serving this great country of ours. You're an important part of securing America, and I want to thank you for your dedication to our country. (Applause.)

I want to congratulate the new Commissioner for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Ralph Basham. Ralph has a long and distinguished record of service in federal law enforcement. He joined the Secret Service during the presidency of Richard Nixon. Some of you all weren't even born during that period of time. (Laughter.) He served as Special Agent in Charge of the Secret Service Offices in Cleveland and in Washington. He rose all the way to the position of Secret Service Director in 2003. I know he made it to that position because I put him there, and I put him there for a reason. He knows what he's doing. He can get the job done.

Ralph served as Chief of Staff for the Transportation Security Administration, and Director of Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. That's where he came to know the Border Patrol Agency -- Academy. He's a decent man. I trust him deeply, and he's going to be a superb leader for Customs and Border Protection.

And now it's my honor to witness his swearing-in. (Applause.)

(Border Patrol Commissioner Ralph Basham is sworn in.)

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President Bush Discusses Comprehensive Immigration Reform in Nebraska

Metropolitan Community College - South Omaha Campus
Omaha, Nebraska

8:32 A.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks for the warm welcome. It's great to be back in Omaha. I'm a little -- I just wish the timing were a little better -- (laughter) -- Senator. If I'd only delayed my trip, we'd have been able to watch the College World Series again. (Laughter and applause.)

But I couldn't delay it, for this reason: This country is debating an important issue. It's an issue about our soul and our character. It's an issue that relates to people that are in our country. It's the immigration issue. And I don't think this issue can wait for a baseball game or a baseball tournament, it needs to be addressed now. And I'm honored to be here in Omaha, Nebraska, right here in the middle of our country, to talk about a vital issue that affects us all.

Before I came here to give the speech, I went to the Juan Diego Center. It's right down the road, if you haven't been there. It's run by Catholic Charities. By the way, Catholic Charities is one of the most important battalions in the army of compassion. (Applause.) It's full of -- it's a center of love and compassion. It's a place where volunteers come to reach out to somebody who could use a little extra help, and those volunteers ask nothing in return.

I saw a place where people are learning to speak English, and learning the civic lessons of what it means to be an American citizen. I sat around a table with entrepreneurs, people from different countries, all of whom are bound by a common dream of owning their own business; people who are willing to work hard to put food on the table for their families and to realize a dream. It was such an inspiring conversation for me.

One such person I met was Salvador Pi a. He's a new American citizen who had a dream; he wanted to own his own business. And Salvador went to the Juan Diego Center, and said, can anybody here help me? For some of us, we take it for granted that it's easy to understand what forms to fill out, or what worker compensation means, or how do you pay your sales tax. But for some, they need a little extra help. They don't need to be inspired to dream big dreams, but they need help to realize those dreams.

He -- Salvador received a \$10,000 loan from Catholic Charities. That's not exactly a micro loan, but it's help. In other words, he said, can you help me; I'll work hard for whatever you do to help me, but can you give me -- lend me a hand, brother. And Catholic Charities did, and today he owns his own business. He's the proud owner of Pi a Auto Repair. By the way, if you're looking for a good man to fix your car -- (laughter) -- give old Salvador a chance.

So what's it like? He said, I've been working hard. I said, do you employ anybody? He said, yes, I've started with just me, and now I've got three employees. That's what America is all about, isn't it, one person with a dream helping others to provide an employment opportunity. Salvador owns his own building. That's what we want in America. We want to encourage an ownership society, where a person like Salvador, who started with nothing, can say, welcome to my business, and I own my building; come on into the building I own, and here are the three people I'm employing.

When you hear people like me talk about assimilation, that's what we're talking about, helping people assimilate into America, helping us remain one nation under God. So I want to thank Catholic Charities for their good work, and I want to thank a dreamer like Salvador for coming here, obeying the law, and working hard to achieve the American Dream.

When I get back to Washington I'm going to sign an executive order creating a task force on the new Americas. This task force is going to be led by our Secretary of Homeland Security, Chertoff. It's going to work to help people at the grass roots level expand the teaching of English and civics and history instruction programs, to help others assimilate into America.

We want to -- I'm going to create -- I've also signed legislation that created an Office of Citizenship at the Department of Homeland Security to promote knowledge of citizens' rights and responsibilities. In other words, one aspect of making sure we have an immigration system that works, that's orderly and fair, is to actively reach out and help people assimilate into our country. That means learn the values and history and language of America. And for those of you who are wondering how you can help our country, volunteer. You'll be a part of such an assimilation process, just like the volunteers at Catholic Charities are doing.

I appreciate the Governor being here. Mr. Governor, thank you and Sally for coming. You're kind to take time out of your schedule to say hello to the old President. (Laughter.) Getting older by the minute, by the way. (Laughter.) I'm not supposed to talk about myself, but in a month, I'm turning 60. For you youngsters, I want to tell you something. When I was your age, I thought 60 was really old. (Laughter.) It's all in your mind. It's not that old, it really isn't. Right, Senator Hagel? (Laughter and applause.)

I want to thank Chuck Hagel for his leadership on this issue, this immigration issue. (Applause.) You see, you can make the choice in Washington, D.C. whether you want to be a leader or whether you want to kind of lay back and see how things work out, and then take a position. You can go to Washington to solve problems, or you can go to Washington to hope those problems go away. Senator Hagel is one of the type of people that said, I'm going to go to Washington to take a lead on this issue. This problem isn't going away, it needs to be fixed now, and I want to thank Chuck Hagel for his leadership on this important issue. (Applause.)

I'm proud to be here with one of the most decent men in the United States Congress, a man who's got a huge heart, a compassionate fellow, a person who didn't have to go into public service, but said, service to a nation you love and a state you care about is an important lesson for others to realize, and Tom Osborne is one of the fine, fine Americans. (Applause.)

I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor, Rick Sheehy, and the Secretary of State, John Gale. Thank you all for coming today.

I'm glad we're at a community college. (Applause.) And I thank Jodi McDowell and the board and the teachers who are here, welcoming me here. This is a -- (applause.) I don't know if the people of Omaha realize what an important asset you have in your community college system. I certainly understand it. Community colleges are a really important part of making sure America remains a competitive nation.

I remind our fellow citizens, particularly those who look to the future and get nervous, and say, well, we can't compete, or there's no way for America to be the economic leader of the world,

there's just too much competition -- I simply just don't believe that. I tell people, let's don't fear the future, let's shape it. And one way we can shape the future is to make sure people have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century, and one of the best places for people to learn the skills of the 21st century is at a community college. (Applause.)

Community colleges are practical. They design curriculum that meets the needs of today's world. So when people come here, they come here to learn a set of skills so they can go out and get a job and be a contributor to our society. Maybe the best way for me to describe how important a community college is, is to tell you a quick story about Heather Fowler. Where is Heather? There you are. You got a lousy seat, but that's okay. (Laughter.) She should have had a better seat because she's the president of the community college. Heather has got, I think, the toughest job in America, and that is being a single mother raising two children. It's particularly tough since one of her daughters is nearly 16. (Laughter.) I know what it's like.

She's the president. She had been out of school for 16 years. She had been working to raise her family, but she realized that she needed to come back to enhance her skills. So guess where she came -- right here. And she's graduating with a nursing degree. See, she had the initiative to say, I may have been dealt a tough hand, but I'm going to play it with all my strength and all my might, and I'm going to take advantage of that which is available. The community colleges makes advantages available to people.

Heather, I want to thank you for your dedication, I want to thank you for your example. If anybody is listening out there and you're wondering whether or not you can find a place to enhance your skills, so you can get a higher-paying job, so you can become a more productive worker, which means more pay for you, take the heart of the president of this school -- take the lesson to heart. Heather Fowler shows what's possible here at the community college system. And I'm honored, Heather, you let me use you as an example to encourage others to come to this fine place of learning. (Applause.)

I want to thank Scot Adams. He tolerated me. He's the fellow who is the executive director of Catholic Charities who took me on the tour. Great tour guide. I want to thank -- I've got two messages for you from Washington, one from the Secretary of Agriculture. (Laughter.) Johanns. He's doing fine. (Laughter.) He's doing really good. As a matter of fact, he remembers where he came from. That's an important part of Washington; it's important that you go up there and serve, but never forget where you came from. And Mike Johanns knows where he came from. And he's doing an excellent job as the Secretary of Agriculture.

And Laura sends her best, by the way. She's a -- I checked in with her this morning. I'm an early riser, maybe a little too early for her in this case. But she's doing good, really good. And I'm proud to call her wife, and I hope you all are proud to call her First Lady. She's a fine First Lady. (Applause.)

We talked about the importance to help people assimilate into our society. This is what's happened throughout the ages here in America. People have learned to assimilate. You know, I like to remind people, when we think about this immigration debate, the first thing people have got to remember is we are a nation of immigrants, that we've had this debate before in American history. This isn't the first time the United States of America has had to take a look at our nature and our soul and our history.

I'm here to talk about a comprehensive immigration reform package, one part of which is to help people assimilate. The reason I want a comprehensive reform package is because I want whatever we do to work. And in my judgment, the definition of work is we want a border that's safe and secure; we want rule of law to prevail; and we want the American Dream to flourish. We're a nation of laws, and we want to uphold those laws. We're also a compassionate nation that treats people decently, and the two are not in conflict. That's what's important for our fellow citizens to understand. The two are not in conflict.

I know you probably look at Washington and think it's impossible to develop a consensus in Washington, D.C. It probably seems that way, doesn't it, when you pay attention to all the sharp elbows being thrown and the people opinionating and screaming and hollering and calling each other names. But there is a consensus emerging on this issue. I remind the folks, I was down -- one reason I'm red-faced is I was down on the border yesterday in Laredo. It was about 106. But I reminded people that last fall, when I moved around the country on this issue, there wasn't any legislation at all. As a matter of fact, it was in doubt as to whether or not people even wanted to talk about the issue. You could hear them saying in Washington, 2006 is an election year; maybe we don't want to take on this issue.

But some of us in Washington said, well, you got to take on the issue. There's a problem, it's not working. The system is not working, the borders aren't secure, we got people living in the shadows of our society, and that's not right. People don't have trust in the border -- the federal government is doing its job on the border, and at the same time, we got a whole industry sprung up of smugglers and document forgers and people who are using people like cattle, and that's not fair and that's not right, either.

And so since then, since when I was -- went down there to the border for the first time to bring up the issue, the House passed a bill. And then I mentioned the Senate passed a bill with Chuck's leadership there. So there's progress. You can't get a piece of legislation out that I can sign unless you get both bodies to move.

And so now we're in what's called a conference committee, and there's a consensus developing. Listen, all of us in America agree we've got to secure our border. That's the job of a federal government. You want to know who's coming into your country and why; that's what you want to know. We have a responsibility to enforce the border.

And we're making good steps toward that. First thing is you've got to have Border Patrol agents to enforce the border. And by 2008, we will have doubled the number of Border Patrol agents to 18,000 Border Patrol agents. And these are people who are highly-trained people, whose job it is to respect the law, to be able to ascertain if somebody's coming into this country illegally or not. See, their job is to make sure the border is open for tourism and legal traffic and shut down for drugs and narcotics and smugglers.

And I was out there to the training plant in Artesia, New Mexico, by the way, yesterday, and there's some fine people serving our country. They really are hard-working, decent folks who volunteered and said, I want to serve the United States of America in the Border Patrol. And since 2001, we've apprehended and sent back six million people trying to get in the country.

People are working hard to defend our border, and so therefore, we're going to double the number of Border Patrol agents. And until we get them stood up, in my judgment, it made sense to send some National Guard folks down there, not to be the law enforcement arm of the Border Patrol, but to man the phones and radars and help build the roads, to complement the Border Patrol, so that the Border Patrol stays on the front line of enforcing the border. And once we get the Border Patrol up and running, the Guard can go back to doing what they're doing. But it makes sense to tell the American people that we understand our obligation and we're going to do our job of enforcing the border.

This is a long border. I mean, it's hard to enforce. And therefore, we need to have good technology down there -- cameras and infrared devices and unmanned aerial vehicles and high-tech -- high-density corridors, some fencing -- just so the Border Patrol can do its job. That's what the American people expect, that we're going to modernize our border, and Congress agrees on that.

The other problem we got along the border is that when people get stopped who are illegally trying to come in the border, a lot of them just get sent back into society. That's not a good system. There's something wrong with this system. In other words, you got people down there enforcing the law, and somebody gets apprehended and they send them to an immigration holding deal, and they say, look, check back after 45 days with us, please -- well, they're not checking back after 45 days. That's called catch and release.

Most of the people we catch are Mexican citizens and they're sent back to their country immediately. But a lot of folks from Central America, for example, are caught, and since we didn't have enough detention beds, places to hold them until they're able to be sent back to their country, people were let out in society. And that demoralized our Border Patrol. It basically said to the American people, we're not serious about enforcing our border.

And so we're ending the practice of catch and release by increasing the number of facilities for people to be compassionately held until they're able to be sent back to their countries. And I'm working with the countries to encourage their leaders to accept back those who have been caught trying to sneak into our country.

Look, the strategy is this: The strategy is to say, once people understand that they can't come into our country illegally and they'll be sent home when they try to, then they're not going to try in the first place. That's part of the strategy.

However, I want you to know that I don't believe we can enforce our border without having a rational way for people to come here to do work that Americans are not doing. It's called a temporary worker plan. A temporary worker plan recognizes that -- two things: one, there are jobs Americans aren't doing, they're just not, and yet there's a need. We got employers who are looking for employees to do a certain kind of work. And the second aspect is you've got to understand family values don't stop at the Rio Grande River. There are a lot of hardworking, decent people who want to put food on the table for their families. And therefore, they're willing to get in the back of an 18-wheeler, or walk across a hot desert to work.

And that's part of the phenomenon you're seeing, you see, and you can't enforce the border like the American people expect us with just Border Patrol and technology alone. So long as there's

that strong desire for people to improve their lives, to do whatever it takes to come to America to work, it's going to make it really hard to enforce that border. And so the best way to do it is to have a plan so people don't feel like they got to sneak in. We ought to have a plan that says, you can come in legally for a limited period of time -- you can come in and do work Americans are not doing, and then you go home. But you can take that money you made and help your family. That's what we ought to have.

See, when people are trying to sneak across the border it makes it hard to enforce the border. When people can come here in a rational way that saves their lives, as well as takes pressure off the border, it will enable us to be able to tell the American people we got a better way of doing the job they expect us to do, which is enforce the border.

I strongly support a temporary worker program. I think most people in Congress understand the rationality of a temporary worker program. I guarantee you many employers here in the state of Nebraska, people in the agricultural sector, people in the hospitality sector, understand the need to have a rational plan that will enable them to have somebody here on a temporary basis to do the jobs Americans aren't doing.

We all agree that we need to uphold the law when it -- oh, by the way, in order to get one of these cards, something I'm about to describe to you, you got to pass a criminal background check. In other words, we want to know who's coming into the country and why they're coming in the country, and we want to help meet an economic need, as well as a humanitarian need.

I repeat to you, America should not tolerate a system that has encouraged coyotes to flourish -- coyotes are the unscrupulous that take a human being who desires to improve his or her life and stuffs them in the back of an 18-wheeler. And in my judgment, a temporary worker program would put coyotes out of business, and society would be better off without them.

We agree in Washington that we need to enforce laws when it comes to hiring illegal workers. See, it's against the law in America to hire an illegal worker. That's what the law says. You can't hire -- you can't uphold the law, however, when people are showing up with forged documents. How can you expect your employers to say you're here legally, or not legally, when employers are not document verifiers? And so, therefore, a temporary worker program has got to have a tamper-proof identification card that shows somebody is here legally and so the employer knows that they're not breaking the law.

It makes sense to me to say to our employers, sure, you ought to be able to hire somebody, but just make sure they're legally here, and here's a system that encourages you to be able to know that you're hiring somebody who is legally here.

The big issue facing Washington is what to do with people that have been here for quite a while. That's really, I think, the ultimate stumbling block, when you think about it. There's serious disagreement on the issue around the country. First of all, we've got to recognize that there are people who have been here that are newly arrived, and then there are people who have been here for, say, a decade who have paid their taxes and built a home and raised a family. So the question is, what do you do, what do you do as a society?

The debate really -- much of the debate I'm sure you're hearing from is either amnesty or deportation, both of which I'm against. Amnesty means you're automatically a citizen. I don't

think that makes sense. It's not fair to those who have waited legally. We got a lot of people waiting to be citizens here, and they've done -- they've adhered to our laws, and they're in line, they're in the citizenship line. And I think it would be unfair to those who have been here legally to say to those who have been here illegally that these folks get ahead of you in line. That doesn't make any sense to me, if we're a country that's going to uphold laws.

On the other hand, it makes no sense at all to say we can find people and run them out of the country. For some, I guess that sounds appealing. It's impractical. It's not going to work, and it's not necessary, in my judgment. It's not the right thing to do.

The right thing to do is to recognize that if you've been here illegally, that there ought to be a cost for doing so, but also recognize there are decent, hardworking people that have contributed to our society at the same time. And so I believe here's a way to work out -- work through this problem. One is to say, you got to pay a fine for being here illegally. You've got to learn the English language. In other words, you got to pay -- repay a debt to society and learn the skills necessary to assimilate into our society. Show us you've been working hard. In other words, there's a way to verify your contributions to our society. And then, if you want to be a citizen, you can get in line to be a citizen, but not at the head of the line, you get to get at the back of the line.

And to me, that is a humane, decent way of addressing a very difficult problem that Congress is going to have to wrestle with. I believe we ought to differentiate between those who've been here for a long period of time, and those who are newly arrived. I know we need to treat people with respect and dignity. I think the best way to assure the American people that we're a nation of laws and a compassionate nation at the same time is to say, pay your debt to society, and if you choose to be a citizen, you can, just you wait in line at the back, not in the beginning.

See, there are lines for people who want to become a citizen, and they're based upon nationality. And Congress can determine the length of the line if they want. If the line is too long for Irish people, or people from different countries, or Mexicans, then increase the number of green cards. If the people are worried about the number of citizens all of a sudden becoming eligible for citizenship, you can decrease the number of green cards. But in the meantime, we need to treat people with respect.

This is a tough debate for America, it really is. It's a tough debate because it's one in which the language can sometimes send the wrong signals about what we're about. People are very emotional about this issue. And my admonition to people who are concerned about the immigration debate is to remember that language can send signals about who we are as a nation. That harsh, ugly rhetoric on the debate tends to divide our country. It tends to forget the values that have made us great.

The values that made us great is that we're a nation that have been united by common ideals, proud of our history, proud of our flag, understanding of the need to have a common language, and at the same time, a society whose soul has been uplifted constantly by the fact that people have come to our country to realize a dream, the dream of working hard and improving their lot in life; the dream of putting food on the table, and at the same time, hoping the child goes to college; the dream of owning their own businesses. That's uniquely American. It enables me to

say to the American people that "one nation under God" means something. And we must never lose that spirit.

For people in Washington, D.C., now's the time to get something done. It's important for our elected leaders to understand if you're going to address the issue of immigration, you've got to address all aspects of the immigration. It's got to be a comprehensive bill if we want there to be an effective bill.

People say, well, you know, Mr. President, it looks impossible that something's going to happen. I disagree. American people want something to happen. They expect us as people elected to office to work together to get something done in a positive way. That's what they expect of us. And I'm going to continue traveling this country reminding the people that we have got an opportunity to put together a comprehensive package to reform the system to make it work, a system that will enforce our border, and a system that will reinforce our values.

I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come and talk to you about this important issue. I'm really glad to be back in Omaha, Nebraska. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our country. (Applause.)

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Executive Order: Task Force on New Americans

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to strengthen the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security and Federal, State, and local agencies to help legal immigrants embrace the common core of American civic culture, learn our common language, and fully become Americans, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment. The Secretary of Homeland Security (Secretary) shall immediately establish within the Department of Homeland Security (Department) a Task Force on New Americans (Task Force).

Sec. 2. Membership and Operation. (a) The Task Force shall be limited to the following members or employees designated by them at no lower than the Assistant Secretary level or its equivalent:

- (i) the Secretary of Homeland Security, who shall serve as Chair;
- (ii) the Secretary of State;
- (iii) the Secretary of the Treasury;
- (iv) the Secretary of Defense;
- (v) the Attorney General;
- (vi) the Secretary of Agriculture;
- (vii) the Secretary of Commerce;
- (viii) the Secretary of Labor;
- (ix) the Secretary of Health and Human Services;
- (x) the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development;
- (xi) the Secretary of Education;
- (xii) such other officers or employees of the Department of Homeland Security as the Secretary may from time to time designate; and
- (xiii) such other officers of the United States as the Secretary may designate from time to time, with the concurrence of the respective heads of departments and agencies concerned.

(b) The Secretary shall convene and preside at meetings of the Task Force, direct its work, and as appropriate, establish and direct subgroups of the Task Force that shall consist exclusively of Task Force members. The Secretary shall designate an official of the Department to serve as the Executive Secretary of the Task Force, and the Executive Secretary shall head the staff assigned to the Task Force.

Sec. 3. Functions. Consistent with applicable law, the Task Force shall:

(a) provide direction to executive departments and agencies (agencies) concerning the integration into American society of America's legal immigrants, particularly through instruction in English, civics, and history;

(b) promote public-private partnerships that will encourage businesses to offer English and civics education to workers;

(c) identify ways to expand English and civics instruction for legal immigrants, including through faith-based, community, and other groups, and ways to promote volunteer community service; and

(d) make recommendations to the President, through the Secretary, from time to time regarding:

(i) actions to enhance cooperation among agencies on the integration of legal immigrants into American society;

(ii) actions to enhance cooperation among Federal, State, and local authorities responsible for the integration of legal immigrants;

(iii) changes in rules, regulations, or policy to improve the effective integration of legal immigrants into American society; and

(iv) proposed legislation relating to the integration of legal immigrants into American society.

Sec. 4. Administration. (a) To the extent permitted by law, the Department shall provide the funding and administrative support the Task Force needs to implement this order, as determined by the Secretary.

(b) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) authority granted by law to an agency or the head thereof; or

(ii) functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(c) This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(d) This order is intended to improve the internal management of the Federal Government. This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity against the United States, its departments, agencies, entities, instrumentalities, officers, employees, agents, or any other person.

GEORGE W. BUSH

THE WHITE HOUSE,

###

President Bush Discusses Immigration in Alexandria, Virginia

Dunkin' Donuts/Baskin Robbins
Alexandria, Virginia

THE PRESIDENT: I just had a really interesting conversation. First of all, this business is owned by two Iranian American brothers. They are small business owners, they are entrepreneurs, they are employing people. And then I met with the district manager, who works with the two Iranian American brothers, happens to be a Guatemalan American citizen. She is learning business. She is taking on additional responsibility. Then I talked to the store manager, who was a Salvadoran American.

These people remind me that one of the great features of our country is that people are able to come here and realize dreams. One of the problems we have because our economy is strong is that small business owners have trouble finding workers. People come here to work.

And one of the things we've got to do is to make sure that they have a verification plan that will enable them to determine, as they hire new workers, whether or not the workers are here illegally. See, it's against the law to hire somebody who is here illegally. And we intend to enforce that law. Part of a comprehensive immigration plan is to give employers the tools necessary to determine whether or not the workers they're looking for are here legally in America. And we've got such a plan -- Basic Pilot, it's called. It's working.

One of the reasons I came is I asked the owner of the business, was the plan working. He said, yes, it is -- it makes it easier for us to verify whether the documents a person gives us are true. I also want -- so therefore I want this plan to be expanded. When I first became President, it was only in six states. Now it's across the nation, but it's a voluntary plan. It ought to be a mandatory plan.

I'm strongly for a comprehensive immigration policy, one that enforces the border. And we're doing that by expanding agents and putting new technologies on our border. But part of a comprehensive immigration plan is to make sure we have interior enforcement, that we uphold our laws, and say to employers, it's against the law for you to hire somebody here illegally; we intend to fine you when we catch you doing it. But we've got to get the employers the tools to make sure that the people who are here are here legally.

Thirdly, I think there needs to be -- I know there needs to be a worker program that says you can come here on a temporary basis and work here legally for jobs Americans aren't doing. If you talk to employers such as these folks, they'll tell you they need workers. And people are willing to do the work that others aren't willing to do, but we want to make sure there's a legal way to do it.

So I look forward to working with Congress for a temporary worker plan that will have background checks to make sure that people that are coming aren't criminals, that say you can come here for a temporary basis, that you can do work others aren't doing, and that's one way to make sure that employers know they're hiring people who are here legally.

We need to make sure we help people assimilate. I met four people here who assimilated into our country. They speak English; they understand the history of our country; they love the American

flag as much as I love the American flag. That's one of the great things about America, we help newcomers assimilate. Here's four folks that are living the American Dream, and I think it helps renew our soul and our spirit to help people assimilate.

And finally, we cannot kick people out who have been here for a while. And so I look forward to working with Congress on a rational plan as to how to make sure people who have been here, the 11 million or so people who have been here for a while are treated with respect and dignity. I'm absolutely opposed to amnesty. Amnesty says you're automatically a citizen. That would be a mistake to grant amnesty. Amnesty would say to somebody, all I've got to do is wait it out; all I've got to do is get here illegally myself and I'll become a citizen. That would be bad policy.

But I'm also realistic to tell you that we're not going to be able to deport people who have been here, working hard and raising their families. So I want to work with Congress to come up with a rational way forward.

Again, I want to thank you all for having me. I love being -- I cannot tell you how I love being with entrepreneurs and dreamers and doers and people who are running things, and managers, and to be with my fellow citizens as we talk about a very important public policy, and that's rational, comprehensive immigration reform.

Thank you all very much. See you back at the White House.

Q Mr. President, North Korea -- do you believe there should be --

THE PRESIDENT: April, would you like me to buy you a cup of coffee?

MS. RYAN: I would love you to.

THE PRESIDENT: What would you want in it?

MS. RYAN: Anything you want to give me.

THE PRESIDENT: What would you like in it, cream and sugar?

MS. RYAN: Sure, sir. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: It's coming your way. It's in the spirit of --

MS. RYAN: Spirit of what?

THE PRESIDENT: Spirit of reaching out.

MS. RYAN: All right. And you got money in your pocket. Do you typically keep money in your pocket?

THE PRESIDENT: No, this is -- Jared let me have this. (Laughter.) I'll repay him. The man offered to give me the coffee for free. You can't run a business if you give your coffee away. I understand how commerce works. He offers a product I want, I then pay for that product -- I'll handle that, sir, thank you -- (laughter.)

MS. RYAN: Mr. President, thank you so much.

THE PRESIDENT: Anything for you.

MS. RYAN: Thank you. Presidential coffee, mmm.

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Fact Sheet: Basic Pilot: A Clear and Reliable Way to Verify Employment Eligibility

"Part of a comprehensive immigration plan is to give employers the tools necessary to determine whether or not the workers they're looking for are here legally in America. And we've got such a plan - Basic Pilot, it's called. It's working."

- President George W. Bush, 7/5/06

Today, President Bush Visited A Dunkin' Donuts Store To Highlight The Basic Pilot Program And The Need For Comprehensive Immigration Reform. Dunkin' Brands Inc. recently announced it will require all of its franchisees to participate in the Basic Pilot program, which helps employers verify employment eligibility. Dunkin' Brands voluntarily signed up for the program because of the difficulty employers face when trying to screen the work eligibility of new hires.

The Basic Pilot Program Is Helping Businesses Comply With The Law. Basic Pilot is a voluntary, online verification system that allows employers to confirm the eligibility of new hires by checking the personal information they provide against Federal databases.

- **When President Bush Took Office, Basic Pilot Was Available In Only Six States, And Today It Is Available Nationwide.**
- **President Bush Has Called On Congress To Make Basic Pilot Mandatory And Provide The Department Of Homeland Security (DHS) With The Funding And Authority To Make Sure It Is An Effective Tool To Prevent The Hiring Of Illegal Workers.** Basic Pilot is still optional, and most employers do not participate. Both the House and Senate immigration bills would require employers to use Basic Pilot. The President's FY07 budget requests \$111 million to expand Basic Pilot for more employers to make use of the program.

President Bush Is Committed To Comprehensive Immigration Reform

All Elements Of Immigration Reform Must Be Addressed Together. The five objectives of comprehensive immigration reform are securing our borders, creating a temporary worker program, making it easier for employers to verify employment eligibility and continuing to hold them to account for the legal status of workers they hire, dealing with the millions of illegal immigrants who are already here, and honoring the great American tradition of the melting pot.

- **President Bush Is Continuing To Work With Congress To Produce A Comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill.** The House started this process by passing a bill that focuses on border security and interior enforcement. The Senate has passed a comprehensive bill that also includes a temporary worker program and a plan to resolve the status of illegal immigrants who are already in our country. Working out the differences between the House and Senate bills will require effort and compromise on both sides. Yet the difficulty of this task is no excuse for avoiding it.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Hold Employers To Account For The Workers They Hire

Funding For Immigration Enforcement Has Increased By 42 Percent Since The President Took Office.

- **Last Year, The President Signed A Bill Doubling Federal Resources For Worksite Enforcement.** The Administration's FY07 budget request seeks \$41.7 million in new funds and 171 additional agents to strengthen Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) worksite enforcement efforts.

To Help Combat Document Fraud, President Bush Has Proposed The Creation Of A New Identification Card For Every Legal Foreign Worker. This card should use biometric technology, such as digital fingerprints, to help make it tamper-proof. With a tamper-proof card, American employers would know that a foreign job applicant is who he says he is - and is in our country legally. A tamper-proof card would be a vital tool to enforce the law, and it must be part of any comprehensive immigration reform.

- **Improving Enforcement Of Our Immigration Laws Also Requires Stiffening The Penalties For Violating Those Laws.** President Bush proposes to increase penalties for employers who violate the law - and to make fines even larger for employers who repeatedly violate the law.

DHS Recently Proposed Its "No-Match" Regulation To Clarify Employers' Obligations In Resolving Questions Regarding Employment Eligibility And To Help The Government Crack Down On Those Employers Who Knowingly Hire Illegal Workers. Millions of Social Security numbers provided by employers do not match the information in the Social Security Administration's (SSA) databases. In some cases when an employer has ten or more employees with inaccurate information, the SSA sends the employer a "no-match" letter. DHS's proposed "no-match" regulation outlines clear steps that employers can take in reaction to these letters. This regulation would also create a safe harbor for employers who undertake good faith efforts to verify their employees' eligibility.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Create A Temporary Worker Program That Helps Us Secure The Border

A Temporary Worker Program Would Create A Legal Path For Foreign Workers To Enter Our Country In An Orderly Way, For A Limited Period Of Time. A temporary worker program would add to our security by making certain we know who is in our country and why they are here.

A Temporary Worker Program Would Meet The Legitimate Needs Of American Employers, And It Would Give Honest Immigrants A Way To Provide For Their Families While Respecting The Law.

The Bush Administration's Worksite Enforcement Efforts

ICE Has Adopted An Aggressive Approach Toward Cracking Down On Employers Who Knowingly Hire Illegal Aliens. ICE has replaced the old system of administrative hearings and

finances with a much tougher combination of criminal prosecutions and asset forfeitures. ICE is conducting far more criminal investigations than the former Immigration and Naturalization Service, which tended to rely on administrative fines as a sanction.

Arrests For Criminal Violations Brought In Worksite Enforcement Actions - The Most Effective Means Of Enforcement And Best Measure Of ICE's New Approach - Have Increased Significantly. These criminal arrests have increased from 24 in FY99, to 160 in FY04, to 176 in FY05, and to a record 382 so far this fiscal year. The number of indictments and criminal convictions has also increased.

- **In April, ICE Carried Out The Largest Single Worksite Enforcement Action Ever Taken Against An Employer.** Seven current and former managers of IFCO Systems North America were charged with harboring aliens and document fraud, and 1,187 unlawfully employed illegal aliens were arrested.
- **From October 2005 Through March 2006, ICE Arrested More Than 2,100 Unlawfully Employed Illegal Aliens As A Result Of Worksite Enforcement Investigations.** ICE also seized millions of dollars in cash and assets from employers.
- **Last Year, Federal Agents Completed Operation Rollback, Which Resulted In The Largest Worksite Enforcement Penalty In U.S. History.** Operation Rollback also resulted in the arrest of hundreds of illegal immigrants and criminal convictions against a dozen employers. The \$15 million settlement and forfeiture resulting from Operation Rollback is greater than the combined sum of all administrative fines from the previous eight years.

DHS Is Focusing Enforcement Efforts On Locating And Removing Criminal Aliens, Building Strong Worksite Compliance Programs To Deter Illegal Employment, And Uprooting The Criminal Infrastructure That Supports Illegal Migration.

- **In May And June, ICE Apprehended More Than 2,100 Criminal Aliens, Gang Members, Fugitives, And Other Immigration Violators In A Nationwide Interior Enforcement Operation Dubbed "Operation Return To Sender."** Among the roughly 2,179 individuals arrested in the operation, roughly half had criminal records for crimes that ranged from sexual assault of a minor to assault with a deadly weapon. Roughly 367 of the arrested aliens were members or associates of violent street gangs and 640 were fugitive aliens who had been issued final orders of removal by an immigration judge but failed to comply.
- **Last Week, ICE Arrested 22 Illegal Alien Workers From An Engineering Company That Provides Contract Services To Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base.** According to investigators, the majority of the company's unauthorized workers used fraudulent social security and alien registration numbers to complete the required forms to obtain their jobs. While there is no evidence that any of the employees had terrorist ties, unauthorized workers with access to security sensitive sites are potentially vulnerable to exploitation by terrorists, smugglers, traffickers, or other criminals.

- **Since March 2003, ICE Fugitive Operations Teams Have Arrested More Than 42,000 Aliens, 31,000 Of Which Were Fugitives.**
- **Since May 2002, An ICE Document And Benefit Fraud Task Force Initiative Targeting The Washington, DC, Area, Operation Card Shark, Has Shut Down Seven Fraudulent Document "Mills," Seized Approximately 10,000 Documents With An Estimated Value Of Over \$1 Million, Apprehended 195 Aliens, And Prosecuted 60 Individuals.**
- **Since 2001, The Number Of ICE Immigration Investigators Has Increased By 25 Percent.**
- **ICE Has Expanded Its Fugitive Operations Teams From 35 To 52 In 2006, And The President's FY07 Budget Seeks Funding To Increase That Number To A Total Of 70 Teams.**

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President Bush Attends Naturalization Ceremony

Walter Reed Army Medical Center
Washington, D.C.

10:12 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thanks for letting me come back, General, proud to be here. I'm really looking forward to witnessing what is going to be a very uplifting ceremony.

In a few moments, these men will swear the oath to become citizens of the United States of America. As part of the ceremony they will promise to support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic. This isn't going to be the first time these men have made such a promise. They took a similar oath when they became soldiers of the United States Army. And their presence here bears witness that they kept their word so that others might be free.

I appreciate General Farmer, and I want to thank all the folks who work here. I'm incredibly impressed by the health care and the decency and the compassion of the people who work here at Walter Reed. You bring great credit to our country. I can't tell you the number of times when I travel around America that I brag about Walter Reed and the health care you deliver.

I appreciate Dr. Emilio Gonzalez, who will be administering the oath of office. He's the Director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. He's the head guy who came over to deliver the oath. (Laughter.)

I want to thank Colonel Deal and everybody else. I particularly want to say thanks to the families of these three men. Thank you for joining us today.

Through the generations, our nation has remained strong and free because men and women put on our uniform and defend this country, and defend our beliefs. The three men we honor today have brought honor to America. Like those who have come before, each of these men chose to protect our country because they love what America stands for.

Army Specialist Sergio Lopez had always wanted to join the Army, and in 2003, he volunteered. After basic training he moved to Fort Hood, Texas, home of the 1st Cavalry Division and the 4th Infantry Division. Specialist Lopez then deployed to Iraq. He put his life on the line each day, driving between observation posts and his unit's forward operating base in the Baghdad area. In January, he was injured by an improvised explosive device.

Specialist Lopez says that becoming a citizen, "represents being acknowledged as having done my duty, having done my part for the country, like the oath says, defending the United States."

Today, we honor Army Private First Class Eduardo Leal-Cardenas. He was injured when an IED blew up his vehicle in Iraq. Private Leal-Cardenas is a man of few words, and he's a man of action. When some questioned whether he would ever walk again, he laughed, and he began his rehab while still in his bed. When Private Leal-Cardenas is asked what citizenship in America means to him, he just said one word: Freedom.

And finally, we honor Army Specialist Lito Santos-Dilone. He was injured while serving as part of the protection detail in Iraq. I first met Specialist Santos-Dilone at this year's National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast. I was working the rope line. He grabbed my hand, and he said, "I'm not a citizen of the United States and I want to be one." Now, here's a man who knows how to take it directly to the top. (Laughter.) I'm proud to be here when he gets sworn in.

We are stronger and more dynamic when we welcome new citizens like these. More than 33,000 non-U.S. citizens currently serve in our military. Isn't that interesting -- 33,000 people who weren't born here serve in our military. And just like everybody else who wears the uniform, they understand the stakes of what it means to serve in the United States military, particularly after September the 11th, 2001.

After that date, I signed an executive order making foreign-born members of our military immediately eligible for U.S. citizenship when they serve on active duty. It made sense to me. If somebody is willing to risk their life for our country, they ought to be full participants in our country.

As our nation debates the future of our immigration policies, we must remember the contribution of these good men, and all who dream of contributing to this country's future. It says something about our country that people around the world are willing to leave their homes and leave their families and risk everything to come to America. Their talent and hard work and love of freedom have helped make America the leader of the world. And our generation will ensure that America remains a beacon of liberty and the most hopeful society this world has ever known.

I believe this country can be a lawful society and a welcoming society at the same time. We're going to enforce our laws, but we'll also honor our proud immigrant heritage. I support a comprehensive immigration reform that will accomplish five clear objectives. First, we'll secure our borders. Second, we must create a temporary worker program that provides foreign workers a legal and orderly way to come into the country and do jobs Americans aren't doing. We must hold employers to account for the workers they hire. In other words, it's against the law to hire an illegal immigrant, and we're going to hold employers to account.

We must resolve the status of millions of illegal immigrants who are here already. We shouldn't be granting people automatic citizenship, nor is it possible to kick people out of the country. There's got to be a rational way, and I proposed a way forward. And, finally, we've got to honor the great American tradition of the melting pot by helping newcomers assimilate into our society.

Congress is now considering legislation on immigration reform; that legislation must be comprehensive. All elements of the problem must be addressed together, or none of them will be solved at all.

This is a joyful day for these men, and it's a joyful day for me to be here with them. And it's a proud day for our nation. We gain three new citizens today, men who knew the cost of freedom and are willing to pay that cost so others can live free. It's a privilege to be their Commander-in-Chief, and I look forward to calling them fellow citizens.

I want to congratulate you for your achievement. I want to thank you for your service. I ask for God's blessings on you and your family, and for God's blessings on the United States of America.

And now we'll have the oath of citizenship administered. (Applause.)

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Fact Sheet: Honoring Immigrant Members of America's Armed Services

Today, President Bush Attended A Naturalization Ceremony For Three Members Of The Armed Forces. These brave troops - all of whom have been injured while serving in the War on Terror - were eligible for immediate naturalization because of an Executive Order the President signed after September 11, 2001. The three troops who became citizens are Army Specialist Sergio Lopez, Army Private First Class Eduardo Leal-Cardenas, and Army Specialist "Lito" Santos-Delone.

America Is Stronger And More Dynamic When We Welcome New Citizens Like These Service Members

There Is No More Fitting Way To Demonstrate Appreciation For The Brave Actions Of Non-Citizen Troops Than By Granting Qualified Service Members U.S. Citizenship As Quickly As Possible. More than 33,000 non-citizens currently serve in our military, putting their lives on the line to defend liberties and freedoms they have yet to secure for themselves. The President believes those willing to risk their lives for our democracy should be full participants in our democracy.

As Our Nation Debates The Future Of Our Immigration Policies, We Must Remember The Contribution Of These Men And Women. The President believes America can be a lawful society and a welcoming society at the same time. He supports comprehensive immigration reform that will secure our borders, create a temporary worker program, make it easier for employers to verify employment eligibility and continue to hold them to account for the legal status of workers they hire, deal with the millions of illegal immigrants who are already here, and honor the great American tradition of the melting pot.

After September 11, 2001, President Bush Signed Executive Order 13269 Making Foreign-Born Members Of Our Military Eligible For Immediate Naturalization.

- **Non-Citizen Members Of The U.S. Military Can Receive Immediate Naturalization Through Active Duty Service During Periods Of Military Hostilities.** Section 329 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) allows non-citizens to receive immediate naturalization through their active duty service in the Armed Forces during periods of military hostilities, if the President designates by Executive Order that the armed services are or were engaged in armed conflict with a hostile foreign force.

Since September 11, 2001, More Than 26,000 Service Men And Women In The U.S. And Overseas Have Been Naturalized. During 2005, more than 6,000 military service members were naturalized, including 1,006 service members naturalized overseas during ceremonies in Afghanistan, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Spain, the United Kingdom and in the Pacific aboard the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk.

While Military Service Members Are Exempt From Many Naturalization Requirements Outlined In The INA, They Must Meet Certain Requirements And Qualifications To Become A U.S. Citizen. These include:

- Demonstrating good moral character;

- Demonstrating knowledge of the English language;
- Demonstrating knowledge of U.S. government and history; and
- Taking an oath of allegiance to the U.S. Constitution much like the oath they took when they became members of the U.S. armed forces.

Biographies Of The Three Naturalized Soldiers

Specialist Noe Santos-Dilone, Originally From The Dominican Republic: Specialist Santos, 21, of Brooklyn, New York, was injured on September 6, 2005, on a mission north of Baghdad traveling in a four-vehicle convoy. His humvee was leading the convoy and was hit by an Explosively Formed Projectile triggered by a laser. The driver and passenger were killed in action and a third passenger sustained serious injuries. Specialist Santos-Dilone's injuries included having his left leg amputated up to the hip. He was a member of the Headquarters Headquarters Company Division Support Brigade with the 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Georgia. He is presently assigned to Medical Hold Company in Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Specialist Sergio Lopez, Originally From Mexico: Specialist Lopez, 24, of Bowlingbrook, Illinois, joined the Army in January of 2003 and is a member of the 1st Battalion 12th Infantry Regiment 4th Brigade Combat Team out of the 4th Infantry Division from Fort Hood, Texas. He was hit by an IED on January 4, 2006, while driving a humvee on a mission south of Baghdad. The force of the blast shattered both his legs. When he returned home on January 11, 2006, he made the difficult decision to have both legs amputated and is now undergoing physical therapy to learn how to walk using prosthetic legs.

Private First Class Eduardo Leal-Cardenas, Originally From Mexico: PFC Cardenas, 21, of Los Angeles, California, was injured by an IED on December 6, 2005, returning to the base from a mission just south of Baghdad. The blast shattered the bones in both legs, broke his femur, broke his ribs, broke his back and neck. He was thrown out of the vehicle and his company returned fire and were engaged in small arms fire for limited time. The enemy was eliminated, and he was then picked up by a medical helicopter and taken to the U.S. Army hospital in Baghdad. He is close to returning to duty at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He is a member of the 101st Airborne Division, 2nd Battalion 502.

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1977
July

President Bush Discusses Comprehensive Immigration Reform in Texas

Anzalduas Park
Mission, Texas

2:40 P.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much. It's good to be home. Thank you for coming. Please be seated. You know, when I left the governor's office, I knew I would leave it in capable hands with Rick Perry. And I'm proud of the job he's done as Governor of the state of Texas, and I'm proud to have been introduced by the Governor of my state.

I want to thank you all for the warm welcome. It's nice to get out of Washington. (Laughter.) It's even better to come down to Texas. (Applause.) And I'm proud -- I'm proud to be with my fellow Texans.

I learned a lot growing up here. I learned a lot as your governor. And as Rick said, I understand this border, and I want to talk to you today about border policy. We have an obligation to secure our border, and we have an obligation to treat people with decency and respect. And we're going to do both in the United States of America. (Applause.)

I just traveled and met some of the fine men and women of the National Guard and Border Patrol who are working long hours to do the -- to keep this border secure. And I first -- I want to say thanks to all the Border Patrol agents and the Guard men and women who are here. (Applause.) You've got a tough job, and the role of the federal government is to give you the tools necessary to do your job.

So we landed, and we saw choppers with all kinds of new equipment on it -- airplanes that can interdict people flying in drugs, fast boats to stop the people trying to bring drugs or people up and down the coast of Texas. One of the things you'll hear me talk about is the need to modernize the technology along this border. And that's what we're going to do.

I also recognized we needed more people to help the Guard and to help the Border Patrol do its job. And so, last May, I said we'll deploy up to 6,000 National Guard members to assist the Border Patrol. And I said we'd get it done by August 1st. Well, we got it done by August 1st. And I want to thank those in the National Guard who have joined us. (Applause.)

It's good to look out in the crowd and see a lot of folks I got to know over the years. And most of the folks that I got to know over the years realize that I married well. And so Laura sends her deep affection to the people of south Texas and our friends here in the audience. She's doing just fine, by the way. She's a great First Lady. (Applause.)

And I'm proud to be here with Congressman Ralph Hall, right out of the Dallas area. Thanks for coming, Congressman. He's a fine Texan who cares deeply about the people along the border here. I'm traveling today with the Commissioner of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Ralph Basham. Ralph, thank you for joining us. (Applause.)

So, what happens when the President sets policy in Washington, like on the Guard policy -- I said, we need to get 6,000 members of the Guard down to help the Border Patrol. And then that order goes down the chain of command, and the first person whose desk it landed on in the chain

of command after Secretary Rumsfeld was Lieutenant General Steve Blum of the Guard Bureau. General Blum said, Mr. President, we're going to get the job done. I said, that's good, General Blum, because come August 1st, I'm going to come down to the area and take a look-see. And he did. Thank you, General Blum, for a job well done. (Applause.)

David Aguilar is the Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol. I don't know if you know this or not, but David's mother lives here in the area. And he made sure the first person I met when I got off the airplane, as far as he is concerned, was his mother. (Laughter.) One reason he's advanced so highly in the Border Patrol, like the head of the whole thing, is because he has listened to his mother -- (laughter) -- just like I have listened to mine. So thank you for being here, David. Thanks for serving.

Major General Chuck Rodriguez, Adjutant General of the Texas National Guard, very instrumental in making sure we've got the troops here to help the Border Patrol. General, thank you very much. General Alan Dehnert is the Adjutant General for the Texas Air National Guard. General Dehnert, thank you very much, as well. General Mike Kostelnik is the Assistant Commissioner, Office of CDP, Air and Marine, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. Look, he's the guy in charge of airplanes and boats. (Laughter.)

We're here, as well, with Lieutenant Colonel Jos Carrillo. He is the Rio Grande Valley Texas National Guard Task Force Commander. See, in other words, when you got to bring people down from other states to help the Border Patrol do their job, you have to have an organization. You just can't send people down here. And one thing the Guard has done well is they've organized this effort. I'm also proud to be here with Chief Lynne Underdown. She is the Rio Grande Valley Border Patrol Sector Chairman. Chief, thank you for being here. Thanks for serving. (Applause.)

I want to thank Mayor Salinas of Mission who's with us today. Mayor, thank you for joining us. Proud you're here. (Applause.) Mayor Cortez of McAllen is with us. Mayor, good to see you. Thank you very much. (Applause.) Yes, that's a good sign, Mayor. It's a good sign.

Finally, one of my dear friends, I've known him for a long time, and that's Mayor John David Franz of Hidalgo. Mayor, it's good to see you. (Applause.) John David told me just as I got off the airplane -- I said, how is your family? He said, "My son has just enrolled in West Point." And you tell him thank you, John David, on behalf of a grateful nation. (Applause.)

For those of you who have got a loved one in the United States military, you tell them the Commander-in-Chief is incredibly proud of the job they're doing to help secure this nation and bring peace to this world. We've got a fantastic military, and it's a military that will have the full support -- (applause.)

I'm going to talk today about comprehensive immigration reform. I say comprehensive because unless you have all five pieces working together it's not going to work at all. There's an important debate facing our nation, and the debate is, can we secure this border and, at the same time, honor our history of being a land of immigrants? And the answer is, absolutely, we can do both. And we will do both. (Applause.)

First, we've got to secure the border. We will keep it open to lawful trade and commerce, and we will work to secure the border to prevent people and goods and weapons from being brought

illegally here. That's our job. It's the job of federal government, it's the job working with the state government to get the job done. That's what the American people expect.

All this strategy has got to start with more money, and so we've increased funding for border security from \$4.6 billion in 2001 to more than \$7.6 billion in 2006. In other words, you can't say the American people are going to make a commitment to secure the border unless you spend money to secure the border, and we're doing just that. And I recently signed an emergency supplemental spending bill that provides an additional \$1.9 billion in immediate funding for border security. And what does that mean? Well, it means we're going to give the Border Patrol, the people on the front lines of securing this border, better technology, and we're going to expand the number of Border Patrol agents that will be able to use that technology. That's the strategy.

We put new resources in people's hands, and as a result of the hard work of Border Patrol since 2001, federal agents have apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering America illegally.

People are working hard. There's people doing their job, but we could do more. There's more work to be done. And so we've called for increases in manpower and technology. We're going to train 6,000 additional agents, so that you've got more people to help you do the job. And in the meantime, the reason we brought the Guard down here was because we knew we had an immediate need to enforce the border. And so, until those 6,000 are trained, we're going to be using National Guard units from over 30 states here. And the plan is working. It makes sense. If we need more manpower and the need for manpower is immediate, it makes sense to call upon our Guard troops to come and help the Border Patrol do the job.

We're going to help build a virtual border by using infrared and motion sensors. We'll deploy unmanned aerial vehicles, and those are going to leverage the manpower we have. It's amazing, the new technologies that are arriving. People are -- these Border Patrol agents will tell you that they're seeing more and better equipment. You got heat sensors on guard stations that will enable people to detect movement. We got choppers that are able to send real-time video streams back to Border Patrol command centers that will then enable a dispatcher to help an agent catch somebody who's smuggling people or drugs on a near real-time basis.

This border is changing, and it needs to change so the Border Patrol can do its job. We call this, by the way, this operation when we moved the Guard down here, Operation Jump-Start. So when you hear about Operation Jump Start, that means Guard.

And the Guard has helped a lot. You know, it's interesting that -- and by the way, the Guard is not just in Texas. It's in Mexico, Arizona, and California, as well. In other words, Border Patrol agents all up and down this southern border are getting help from our Guard men and women. And the Guard are doing -- look, they're not arresting people. We're not going to militarize this border. The job of arresting people is up to the Border Patrol. That's your job. That's what you're trained to do. That's what your skill level is. Their job is to help the Border Patrol -- you know, surveillance and construction, logistics. I mean, if you've got a Guard person dispatching, it means there's more -- one more Border Patrol agent out on the front line. And so we're going to use this Guard until we get 6,000 more people trained.

For the people who wonder whether the Guard could be effective down here when we deployed Operation Jump Start, since we've deployed it, our agents have seen 17,000 pounds of illegal drugs and apprehended 2,500 illegal immigrants. In other words, the Guard is leveraging -- giving the Border Patrol more opportunity.

Last month, Border Patrol agents in this sector confiscated more than 4,200 pounds of marijuana that was hidden in a tractor trailer. And the support of the Guard was important in making this seizure happen. So for those of you in the Guard, I want to thank you for coming down here and helping these good folks in the Border Patrol, and your presence is making a difference. (Applause.)

In order to make sure the Border Patrol is effective, we've got to stop what's called catch and release. For the veterans down here, they know what catch and release means. And it had to have been discouraging for you -- risk your life, or you're spending long hours, and all of a sudden, you apprehend people who are sneaking in here illegally. But we didn't have enough detention space to hold people. And so the people are given a court date. And they said, you check back in when your court date comes back up. But a lot of folks didn't want to check back in when their court date came up. So they just didn't show up. And one of the things I learned early on was how discouraging that can be for the people on the front line of securing this border.

You can imagine what it must feel like to work hard and chase somebody down, treat them humanely, send them in for their court date -- and they don't show up. It seemed like wasted effort, didn't it? So this government is committed to ending this unacceptable practice. Step one is to add detention beds. If you didn't have enough detention space in the first place, the way you solve the problem is you add beds. And here in the Rio Grande Valley, we're going to add 1,500 beds in short order.

We're also accelerating the deportation process, particularly for people who are not from Mexico that we catch coming across the border. Last year, for example, we put together what was called Operation Texas Hold 'Em. We cut through red tape so we could quickly return Brazilians that we caught illegally crossing this border. We sent a clear message: When we catch you there will be immediate deportation. And guess what happened. As a result of that clear message the number of illegal immigrants from Brazil has dropped significantly across the whole region.

That's the message we must continually send over and over again to people who feel like they can come from Central America, for example, and if caught, be let back into society, and if not caught, they're able to escape the Border Patrol. We want to send a clear message: We will enforce our border.

But in order to make sure these Border Patrol agents can do their job, we must have a temporary worker program. You got to understand here, and I know you do, there are people doing jobs Americans aren't doing. There are people who have come across this border to do work Americans are not doing. And it makes sense to let them come on a temporary basis in a legal way. (Applause.)

Wouldn't you rather have people who are doing work Americans are not doing not trying to sneak across the border? I know the Border Patrol agents would rather not have people try to sneak across the border. It makes sense to me to say to somebody, if you're going to do a job

Americans aren't doing, you can come for a period of time -- say, three years -- and do that work, and support your family back home. And then you go home after your time is up. That's the way to treat people humanely.

I don't like a system that's not working, and a system that forces people who want to work in the back of 18-wheelers. I don't like a system that encourages smuggling. I don't like a system that encourages people to walk across the desert to risk their life. (Applause.) I think we need to have a system that is orderly and fair and transparent.

We've got to enforce our immigration laws at the work site. But as a result of illegal activities in trying to get people into this country, there's a lot of document forgery. Our employers cannot be document verifiers. They don't know whether they've got a real document to look at or a fake document to look at. One of the temporary -- parts of the temporary worker program would be to give people a tamper-proof temporary worker card, that they could say, I'm legal, I'm here to do the job, I'm going to work for a period of time and then I'm going to go home after I work a period of time. I can be here legally. That will make it easier for us to have work site enforcement.

Listen, we will hold people to account. It's against the law in the United States to employ somebody who is here illegally. And a nation of law is a nation that upholds its laws. But we've got to be wise about the policy that we enforce. We've got to give people something that document forgers can't tamper with, so our employers know whether or not they're hiring somebody who's here illegally, or not.

Fourthly, we've got to make sure that we resolve the status of illegal immigrants who are already in this country. It's an interesting debate taking place in America -- I'll give you my position. One, I do not think we ought to grant amnesty to people who are here illegally. And the reason I don't is I think that will encourage a whole other bunch of people to come. (Applause.) But I know you cannot deport 10 million people who have been here working. It's unrealistic. It may sound good in certain circles and political circles. It's not going to work.

The best plan is to say to somebody who has been here illegally, if you've been paying your taxes, and you've got a good criminal record, that you can pay a fine for being here illegally, and you can learn English, like the rest of us have done, and you can get in a citizenship line to apply for citizenship. You don't get to get in the front, you get to get in the back of the line.

But this idea of deporting people is just not -- it doesn't make any sense to me, and it doesn't make any sense to a lot of people who understand this issue. So here's a reasonable way to treat people with respect and accomplish what we want to accomplish, which is to be a country of law and a country of decency and respect. (Applause.)

And finally, in order to make a comprehensive immigration plan work, we've got to help folks assimilate into our society. And what does that mean? It means, help people learn English, to help people understand the traditions and history of the United States of America.

One of the fabulous things about our country is that our soul has constantly been renewed by people seeking the American Dream, people coming here to work to realize their dream, people wanting to raise a family in the United States of America. And we come from different backgrounds, but we're all united by the great ideal of being an American citizen. That's why we

say, we're one nation under God. And to help people assimilate will help us keep that in place. (Applause.)

And so it's good to be down here on our border. It's an exciting part of the United States of America. It's amazing how this country has grown and how vital the valley is of the state of Texas. It's got to be exciting for people to grow up in this part of the world and see the new prosperity. Gosh, it wasn't all that long ago that -- I know these Mayors can remember -- the economy was tough down here. It was kind of farming, and that was all.

And now, there's economic vitality. People are making a living, and the schools are improving. It's a great place to raise a family. It's a great place to also come and honor those who wear the uniform of the United States of America, whether it be local law enforcement, or the sheriff's departments, or the Border Patrol, or the United States military. We're a blessed country. We're a great country because we've got people who stand up and say, I want to serve. And it's the service of the men and women in uniform that are doing the job down here that the American people expect.

I can't tell you how proud I am to be the Commander-in-Chief of the military and to be the President of the United States, full of such decent and honorable people. I'm honored to be back in this part of the world. I want to thank you for coming out and giving me a chance to talk about a comprehensive immigration plan. I expect the United States Congress to do its duty and pass comprehensive immigration reform.

God bless. (Applause.)

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Fact Sheet: Operation Jump Start: Acting Now to Secure the Border

Today, President Bush Toured The Rio Grande Valley Border Patrol Sector And Discussed The Need For Comprehensive Immigration Reform. The President has called on Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform that will secure our borders, enhance worksite enforcement, create a temporary worker program, resolve the status of illegal immigrants already here, and promote assimilation into our society, including by learning English.

The Administration Is Taking Action To Secure Our Border And Deter Illegal Immigration

Under Operation Jump Start, About 6,000 National Guard Members Have Deployed To Help The Border Patrol Secure The Southern Border. In May, the President pledged that we would have up to 6,000 National Guard members in Southern Border States. Today, the President announced that we have met that pledge.

- **National Guard Members Are On Duty Supporting The Border Patrol In Texas, California, Arizona, And New Mexico.** The President's proposals to put more agents in place and upgrade technology will take time. National Guard troops are providing immediate help with surveillance, construction, and logistics. Guardsmen are building fences, as well as manning detection equipment on the border and in command centers.
- **The Arrival Of National Guard Reinforcements In Four Southern Border States Has Put More Manpower On The Border And Allowed The Border Patrol To Move More Than 300 Agents Into Front-Line Positions.** This additional manpower is producing results:
 - With support from National Guard members deployed under Operation Jump Start, Border Patrol agents have apprehended more than 2,500 illegal immigrants and seized more than 17,000 pounds of illegal drugs since June 15.
 - Last month, Border Patrol Agents in the Rio Grande Valley sector confiscated more than 4,200 pounds of marijuana hidden in a trailer. The support of the National Guard was important to making this seizure happen successfully.

We Are Deterring Illegal Immigration By Addressing The Problem Of "Catch And Release" At The Southern Border. For years, the government did not have enough detention space to hold all the illegal immigrants we catch at the border. Many were given a court date and released into society. When the court date arrived, many did not show up. The practice of "catch and release" is unacceptable, and the Administration is working to end it on the Southern border.

- **We Have Expanded Beds In Detention Centers.** We have added 500 beds in a detention center in the Rio Grande Valley, and we will be adding another 1,500. Earlier this summer, the President signed an emergency spending bill providing funding for 4,000 new beds, and the President's FY07 budget proposes funding to further increase this number to an estimated total of 6,700 new beds.
- **We Are Accelerating The Deportation Process.** Our actions have helped end the old practice of "catch and release" at the Southern border for illegal immigrants from Brazil,

Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. For example, under Operation Texas Hold 'Em, we cut through red tape so we could quickly return all Brazilians caught illegally crossing the Southern border, resulting in a significant drop in the number of apprehended illegal immigrants from Brazil across the border as a whole.

Since The President Took Office In 2001, We Have Increased Funding For Border Security By 66 Percent To More Than \$7.6 Billion, Equipped The Border Patrol With Better Technology, Built New Infrastructure, And Expanded The Border Patrol From About 9,000 To About 12,000 Agents. Since 2001, Federal agents have used these resources to apprehend and send home more than 6 million people entering America illegally. Earlier this summer, the President signed an emergency spending bill that provided an additional \$1.9 billion in immediate funding for border security.

President Bush Has Called On Congress To Fund Increases In Manpower And Technology That Will Help The Border Patrol Build On Its Success And Gain Full Control Of The Border. Under the President's proposal, we will increase the size of the Border Patrol by an additional 6,000 agents, to a total of about 18,000. In addition, we will build high-tech fences in urban corridors, and new patrol roads and barriers in rural areas.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Address All Aspects Of Our Broken Immigration System

The President Has Called On Congress To Send Him A Comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill That He Can Sign Into Law. Our Nation can have an immigration policy that is both rational and compassionate. Both the House and Senate have passed bills. The President calls on Congress to resolve its differences and send him a comprehensive immigration reform bill that he can sign into law.

In Addition To Securing The Border, Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must:

- **Create A Temporary Worker Program That Would Establish A Legal Channel For Foreign Workers To Enter Our Country In An Orderly Way, For A Limited Period Of Time.** By creating a lawful channel for those who want to work in our country, a temporary worker program would reduce the number of people trying to sneak across the border, freeing agents to focus on apprehending criminals and terrorists who pose a threat to our security.
- **Enforce Our Immigration Laws At The Worksite.** We are cracking down on employers who violate the law and working to ensure honest businesses have the tools they need to follow the law. The President has called for the creation of a tamper-proof identification card for legal foreign workers, and has asked Congress to make the Basic Pilot employment verification program mandatory and provide Homeland Security with the funding and authority to make sure it is an effective tool.
- **Resolve The Status Of Illegal Immigrants Who Are Already In The Country.** The President opposes amnesty. He supports a rational middle ground between automatic citizenship for every illegal immigrant and mass deportations of people who have been living here for many years with jobs, families, and deep roots in our country.

- **Help Newcomers Assimilate Into Our Society.** We will honor the American tradition of the melting pot and help immigrants assimilate by learning our history, our values, and the English language.

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President's Radio Address

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. This week, my Administration met a key objective in our efforts to better secure our Nation's border.

In May, I pledged to deploy up to 6,000 National Guard members to support the Border Patrol, and we fulfilled that pledge by August 1st. Through Operation Jump Start, National Guard members are now on duty supporting the Border Patrol in Texas, California, Arizona, and New Mexico.

On Thursday, I visited the Rio Grande Valley Border Patrol Sector in Texas. I saw firsthand how the National Guard is working with our Border Patrol agents to improve border security. National Guard troops are helping with surveillance, construction, and logistics. They're building and repairing fences, maintaining vehicles, and manning detection equipment on the border and in command centers.

The arrival of National Guard units has allowed the Border Patrol to move more agents into front-line positions, and this additional manpower is delivering results. With the support of the National Guard, Border Patrol agents have seized over 17,000 pounds of illegal drugs and caught more than 2,500 illegal immigrants since June 15th. Just last month, Border Patrol agents in the Rio Grande Valley Sector confiscated more than 4,200 pounds of marijuana hidden in a tractor trailer. And the support of the National Guard was important in making this seizure happen.

Rational and comprehensive immigration reform must begin with border security, and we have more to do. So I've asked Congress to fund dramatic increases in manpower and technology for the Border Patrol. We will add 6,000 new Border Patrol agents. We will build high-tech fences in urban corridors and new patrol roads and barriers in rural areas. And we will employ motion sensors, infrared cameras, and unmanned aerial vehicles to prevent illegal crossings. By deploying 21st century technologies, we will make our Border Patrol agents even more effective and our border more secure.

Yet to be successful, comprehensive immigration reform must also accomplish four other critical goals. We need a temporary worker program that will create a legal and orderly path for foreign workers to enter our country to work on a temporary basis. This program will add to our security by helping us know who is in our country and why they are here. And by reducing pressure on our border, it will free up our Border Patrol to focus on making sure we stop terrorists, violent criminals, and drug smugglers from entering our country.

We need to enforce our immigration laws at our Nation's work sites. To enforce the law, we have launched raids on businesses that knowingly hire illegal immigrants. We are filing criminal charges against these employers, and we are prosecuting them to the fullest extent of the law.

To help honest businesses follow the law, I propose more effective tools to verify the legal status of workers. These tools should include a tamper-proof identification card for legal foreign workers. By taking these steps, we will make it easier for businesses to obey the law and leave them no excuse for violating it.

We need to resolve the status of illegal immigrants who are already here. They should not be given an automatic path to citizenship. This is amnesty, and I oppose it. Amnesty would be

unfair to those who are here lawfully, and it would invite further waves of illegal immigration. We will find a rational middle ground between automatic citizenship for illegal immigrants and mass deportations of people who've been living here for many years with jobs, families, and deep roots in our country.

Finally, we need comprehensive immigration reform that honors the American tradition of the melting pot by helping newcomers assimilate. Americans are bound together by our shared ideals, our history, and the ability to speak and write the English language. When immigrants assimilate, they advance in our society, realize their dreams, and add to the unity of America. We can fix the problem of illegal immigration and deliver an immigration system that is rational and compassionate.

By passing comprehensive immigration reform, we will uphold our laws, meet the needs of our economy, and keep America what she has always been -- an open door to the future, a blessed and promised land, one Nation under God.

Thank you for listening.

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