

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of the Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement

July 28, 2005

I am proud that the House of Representatives has acted to advance America's economic and national security interests by passing the CAFTA-DR agreement. CAFTA helps ensure that free trade is fair trade. By lowering trade barriers to American goods in Central American markets to a level now enjoyed by their goods in the U.S., this agreement will level the playing field and help American workers, farmers, and small businesses. The agreement is more than a trade bill; it is a commitment of freedom-loving nations to advance peace and prosperity throughout the Western Hemisphere. We have a moral obligation and a vital national security interest in helping the democracies of Central America and the Dominican Republic succeed, and CAFTA furthers that goal. I look forward to signing this important legislation into law.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Medical Liability Reform Legislation

July 28, 2005

I am pleased that the House of Representatives has again passed medical liability reform legislation. The Nation's medical liability system is badly broken, as frivolous lawsuits are threatening access to quality health care and raising health care costs for all Americans. The medical liability crisis is driving up health care costs through higher insurance premiums, higher medical bills, and the practice of defensive medicine. This crisis also is imposing substantial costs on the Federal Government and all taxpayers who bear the cost of Medicare and Medicaid. The liability crisis is driving good doctors out of medicine and leaving patients in many communities without access to both basic and specialty medical services. This is a national problem that deserves a national solution. For the sake of all Americans, it is time for

the Senate to pass meaningful medical liability reform legislation.

Memorandum on Reimbursement to the Office of the United States Trade Representative

July 28, 2005

Memorandum for the Director of the Office of Management and Budget

Subject: Reimbursement to the Office of the United States Trade Representative

Pursuant to the authority in title III of division H of Public Law 108-447, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005, and in section 108 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby authorize the transfer from the appropriation, "Unanticipated Needs:"

| To | Amount |
|--|-----------|
| Executive Office of the President, Office of the United States Trade Representative | \$493,000 |

To defray expenses incurred by the mission of the United States Trade Representative to Geneva for additional security requirements.

I hereby determine that this expenditure is necessary to meet unanticipated needs in furtherance of the national interest.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 29.

Remarks on Signing the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act of 2005

July 29, 2005

Welcome. Good morning. In a few moments, I'll have the honor of signing the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act of 2005. This bill is a critical step toward our goal of ensuring top-quality, patient-driven health care for all Americans.

With this law, we'll be able to obtain more accurate information about medical treatments. And by providing doctors with information about what treatments work and what treatments cause problems, we will reduce medical errors that injure and cause the deaths of thousands of Americans each year.

I commend the Members of Congress for their hard work in passing this piece of legislation. This has been a productive week for the United States Senate and the House of Representatives. I'm looking forward to signing an energy bill that will encourage conservation, increase domestic production, and help reduce our dependence on foreign oil. I'm looking forward to signing a highway bill that will strengthen our transportation infrastructure and improve the safety of our roads and create jobs.

I appreciate the House and the Senate for passing the Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement that will level the playing field for America's goods as well as promote democracy in our hemisphere. All these bills are good bills. They're good for the people of this country. And I appreciate their hard work in getting them to my desk.

I want to thank the Secretary of Health and Human Services for joining us, Mike Leavitt. I appreciate Senator Bill Frist, the majority leader, Dr. Bill Frist. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Committee Chairman Mike Enzi, Senator Judd Gregg, and Ted Kennedy and Jim Jeffords for their good work in the United States Senate on this piece of legislation. I appreciate my friend from Texas, Joe Barton—Congressman Joe Barton and Nathan Deal and Mike Bilirakis for joining me here today as I sign this piece of legislation.

I want to thank Dr. Edward Hill, who is the president of the American Medical Association, straight out of Mississippi. [*Laughter*] I appreciate Dr. Sophia Smith, who is the Children's National Medical Center, Dr. Janis Orlowski, who is the senior vice president of the Washington Hospital Center, and Susan Mintz—Suzanne Mintz, the president of the National Family Caregivers Association. Thank you all for coming. I also want to welcome our professionals who are here with us today.

The Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act will help ensure that Americans continue to benefit from the greatest medical system in the world. To maintain the highest standards of care, doctors and nurses must be able to exchange information about problems and solutions. Yet in recent years, many doctors have grown afraid to discuss their practices because they worry that the information they provide will be used against them in a lawsuit.

This bill will help solve that problem. This is a commonsense law that gives legal protections to health professionals who report their practices to patient safety organizations. By providing critical information about medical procedures, doctors and nurses can help others learn from their experiences. That's why I said it's a commonsense law. By making essential information more available across America, we will help ensure that patients benefit from the best medical treatment, no matter where they live. That seems to make sense to me.

This bill builds on other commonsense reforms we're making to the American health care system. By providing a new Medicare prescription drug benefit, we're giving seniors more choices and helping them get the medicine they need. By making health savings accounts more broadly available, we're helping more Americans own and control their own health coverage. By increasing funding for community health centers, we're helping the poor and the uninsured get the quality health care they deserve and need.

We'll continue working to improve our health care system. To make it easier for employers to offer coverage to their workers, we must allow small businesses to join together to buy insurance at the same discounts that big businesses can do. To reduce costs and improve care, we must harness the power of information technology to computerize health records.

And we've got to stop the frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and driving good professionals out of this important profession. We need medical liability reform now. The bill I sign today is an example of people coming together to do what's right for the country.

Again, I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here. It is now my honor to sign this good bill into law.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:09 a.m. in Room 450 in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, S. 544, approved July 29, was assigned Public Law No. 109-41.

Statement on Congressional Action on the “Energy Policy Act of 2005”

July 29, 2005

I applaud the Congress for today’s passage of an energy bill that will help secure our energy future and reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy. The energy bill will increase conservation and efficiency, diversify our energy supply with alternative and renewable sources, expand domestic energy production in environmentally sensitive ways, and modernize our electricity infrastructure. Four years ago, I called for a national energy plan to address our Nation’s energy needs for the 21st century. The bipartisan energy bill passed today will give America a comprehensive national energy strategy for the first time in more than a decade and is critically important to our long-term national and economic security. I look forward to signing it into law.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President’s public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

July 23

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

Also in the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt to express his condolences on the recent terrorist attacks in Sharm el-Sheikh.

July 24

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with cyclist Lance Armstrong to congratulate him on winning a record seventh straight Tour de France.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC. Later, they attended a White House tee-ball game on the South Lawn.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Members of Congress to discuss energy legislation.

July 25

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush went to the National Gallery of Art where they toured the Gilbert Stuart exhibition.

Later in the morning, the President returned to the White House. Later, in the East Room, he participated in a photo opportunity with Presidential Rank Award recipients.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President participated in a meeting with African American leaders.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jennifer L. Dorn to be U.S. Alternate Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate C. Boyden Gray to be the U.S. Representative to the European Union with the Rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard H. Jones to be Ambassador to Israel.

The President announced his intention to nominate Francis J. Ricciardone, Jr., to be Ambassador to Egypt.

The President announced his intention to nominate Darlene F. Williams to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (Policy Development and Research).

The President announced his appointment of Michele A. Davis as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications and Global Outreach.