

to spend money on new research for alternative feedstocks for ethanol. I mean, we understand the hog growers are getting nervous because the price of corn is up. But we also believe strongly that research will enable us to use wood chips and switch grass and biomass to be able to develop the ethanol necessary to help us realize the vision outlined in this bill.

I appreciate very much the fact that we're going to fund additional research on new battery technologies to power plug-in hybrids. We're spending money on innovative ways to capture solar power. We're making—providing incentives for nuclear energy. If we're serious about making sure we grow our economy and deal with greenhouse gases, we have got to expand nuclear power.

It is going to take time to transition to this new era. And we're still going to need hydrocarbons. And I hope the Congress will continue to open access to domestic energy sources—certain parts of the Outer Continental Shelf in ANWR. And to protect us against disruptions in our oil supply, I ask Congress to double the current capacity of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

With these steps—particularly in the bill I'm about to sign—we're going to help American consumers a lot. We'll help them by diversifying our supplies, which will help lower energy prices. We'll strengthen our security by helping to break our dependence on foreign oil. We'll do our duty to future generations by addressing climate change.

And so I thank the Members of Congress. I appreciate the fact that we've worked together, that we can show what's possible in addressing the big issues facing our Nation. This is a good bill, and I'm pleased to sign it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. at the Department of Energy. H.R. 6, approved December 19, was assigned Public Law No. 110–140.

Remarks on Signing a Bill To Prevent Taxation of Payments From the Hokie Spirit Memorial Fund to Virginia Tech Victims and Families

December 19, 2007

It's my honor to welcome the president of Virginia Tech, the mayor of Blacksburg, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and, of course, distinguished members of the congressional delegation, here as I sign a bill that's going to help the folks who suffered mightily on that day when a gunman killed their loved ones. It's a good piece of legislation. I appreciate members from both parties working on it.

And I asked the President how—what the spirits are like there at Virginia Tech, and he said they're strong. And I'm not surprised. Having been there for that memorial ceremony, I left with the distinct impression that of all the communities in America that could deal with a tragedy, it's the Virginia Tech community.

And so I want to say to the families who still suffer, we think about you. And to the students and faculty and alumni and leadership of Virginia Tech, thank you for helping those who suffer reconcile and recover from the grief they feel. So it's my honor to sign this important piece of legislation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Charles W. Steger, president, Virginia Tech; Mayor Ron Rordam of Blacksburg, VA; and Governor Timothy M. Kaine of Virginia. H.R. 4118, approved December 19, was assigned Public Law No. 110–141.

Remarks Following a Visit With Wounded Troops and Their Families at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland

December 19, 2007

The President. Admiral, thank you very much for your hospitality. You know, it's a great honor to come here. It's an honor to see the troops who have been wounded; and it's an honor to hug their families; and it's an honor to see the fabulous care that these folks receive. You know, our citizens wonder