

Sergeant Christopher S. Perez from Hutchinson died on May 23, 2005.

Sergeant Courtney D. Finch from Leavenworth died on July 24, 2007.

Corporal David M. Unger from Leavenworth died on October 17, 2006.

Lance Corporal Jose S. Marin-Dominguez Jr. from Liberal died on May 14, 2006.

Staff Sergeant Henry W. Linck from Manhattan died on December 7, 2006.

Lance Corporal Christopher B. Wasser from Ottawa died on April 8, 2004.

Staff Sergeant Kevin L. Zeigler from Overland Park died on August 12, 2006.

Private 1st Class Peter D. Wagler from Partridge died on January 23, 2006.

Specialist Joseph L. Lister from Pleasanton died on November 20, 2003.

Sergeant Ian C. Anderson from Prairie Village died on January 15, 2007.

Corporal Michael Raymond Speer from Redfield died on April 9, 2004.

Private Dustin L. Kreider from Riverton died on March 21, 2004.

Specialist Lucas A. Frantz from Tonganoxie died on October 18, 2005.

Private Jeremy L. Drexler from Topeka died on May 2, 2004.

Specialist Kyle G. Thomas from Topeka died on September 25, 2003.

Specialist Don Allen Clary from Troy died on November 8, 2004.

Sergeant Jacob Lee Butler from Wellsville died on April 1, 2003.

Specialist Michael D. Brown from Williamsburg died on October 16, 2007.

Sergeant Benjamin C. Morton from Wright died on May 22, 2005.

Staff Sergeant Justin J. Galewski from Olathe died on April 15, 2002.

Sergeant Michael C. Barry from Overland Park died on February 1, 2003.

Specialist David E. Hall from Union Town died on February 25, 2004.

Corporal Jeremiah S. Cole from Hiawatha died on August 16, 2006.

Sergeant 1st Class Bernard Lee Deghand from Mayetta died on September 15, 2006.

Sergeant Charles J. McClain from Fort Riley died on October 31, 2006.

Sergeant Jeffery S. Mersman from Parker died on November 9, 2007.

Sergeant Jerry W. Mills, Jr., from Arkansas City died on November 29, 2005.

Sergeant Evan S. Parker from Arkansas City died on October 26, 2005.

Sergeant Alexander J. Funcheon from Bel Aire died on April 29, 2007.

Private 1st Class Ryan R. Cox from Derby died on June 15, 2003.

Specialist Joseph F. Herndon II from Derby died on July 29, 2004.

Specialist Dustin K. McGaugh from Derby died on September 30, 2003.

Sergeant Willsum Mock from Harper died on October 22, 2006.

Specialist Eric C. Palmer from Maize died on June 24, 2007.

Staff Sergeant David R. Berry from Wichita died on February 22, 2007.

Private 1st Class Chad E. Marsh from Wichita died on February 17, 2007.

1st Sergeant Timmy J. Millsap from Wichita died on April 25, 2005.

Mr. Speaker, by naming this post office building the Jamie O. Maugans Post Office, I hope that everyone in south central Kansas will come to know and remember this young man and his sacrifice. Furthermore, I hope that we can all recommit ourselves to honor those who have fallen in battle in defense of this Nation. I ask my colleagues to support this important effort.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5135.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 281) celebrating the birth of Abraham Lincoln and recognizing the prominence the Declaration of Independence played in the development of Abraham Lincoln's beliefs.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 281

Whereas Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, was born of humble roots on February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky;

Whereas Abraham Lincoln rose to political prominence as an attorney with a reputation for fairness, honesty, and a belief that all men are created equal and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights;

Whereas Abraham Lincoln was elected and served with distinction in 1832 as a captain of an Illinois militia company during the Black Hawk War;

Whereas Abraham Lincoln was elected to the Illinois legislature in 1834 from Sangamon County and was successively re-elected until 1840;

Whereas Abraham Lincoln revered the Declaration of Independence, forming the motivating moral and natural law principle for his opposition to the spread of slavery to new States entering the Union and to his belief in slavery's ultimate demise;

Whereas Abraham Lincoln was elected in 1846 to serve in the United States House of Representatives, ably representing central Illinois;

Whereas Abraham Lincoln re-entered political life as a reaction to the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 which he opposed;

Whereas Abraham Lincoln expounded on his views of natural rights during the series of Lincoln-Douglas debates in 1858 declaring in Charleston, Illinois that natural rights were "... enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" and these views brought Lincoln into national prominence;

Whereas Abraham Lincoln, through a legacy of courage, character, and patriotism, was elected to office as the 16th President of the United States on November 6, 1860;

Whereas Abraham Lincoln believed the Declaration of Independence to be the anchor of American republicanism, stating on February 22, 1861, during an address in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at Independence Hall that, "I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence

... I have often inquired of myself, what great principle or idea it was that kept this Confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of separation of the Colonies from the motherland; but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but, I hope, to the world, for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weight would be loosed from the shoulders of men";

Whereas, upon taking office and being thrust into the throes of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln wrote the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all slaves in southern States that seceded from the Union on January 1, 1863;

Whereas, on November 19, 1863, Abraham Lincoln dedicated the battlefield at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania with the Gettysburg address, which would later be known as his greatest speech, that harkened back to the promises of the Declaration of Independence in the first sentence: "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal";

Whereas Abraham Lincoln was reelected to the Presidency on November 8, 1864, by 55 percent of the popular vote;

Whereas Abraham Lincoln gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country, dying six weeks into his second term on April 15, 1865;

Whereas the year 2009 will be the Bicentennial anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, and the United States will observe 2 years of commemorations beginning February 12, 2008; and

Whereas all Americans could benefit from studying the life of Abraham Lincoln as a model of achieving the American Dream through honest, integrity, loyalty, and a lifetime of education: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the United States Congress—

(1) requests that the President issue a proclamation each year recognizing the anniversary of the birth of President Abraham Lincoln and calling upon the people of the United States to observe such anniversary with appropriate ceremonies and activities; and

(2) encourages State and local governments and local educational agencies to devote sufficient time to study and appreciate the reverence and respect Abraham Lincoln had for the significance and importance of the Declaration of Independence in the development of American history, jurisprudence, and the spread of freedom around the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in consideration of H. Con. Res. 281, which celebrates the birth of Abraham Lincoln and recognizes the prominence the Declaration

of Independence played in the development of Lincoln's beliefs.

H. Con. Res. 281 enjoys the support and cosponsorship of 54 Members of Congress and was introduced by Representative DONALD MANZULLO of Illinois on January 23, 2008. A similar measure, Mr. Speaker, S. Con. Res. 65, has been sponsored by our friend, Senator RICHARD DURBIN.

As we honor Abraham Lincoln, it is important to note that the United States Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission was established by this Congress in 2000 to plan the national observance of the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth in 2009.

The mission of the commission is to commemorate the 200th birthday of Abraham Lincoln, emphasizing the contribution of his thoughts and his ideals to America and to the world and serving as a catalyst for strengthening freedom, democracy, and equal opportunity for all.

The commission, which is co-chaired by Senator RICHARD DURBIN and Representative RAY LAHOOD, is focused on informing the public about the impact Abraham Lincoln had on the development of our Nation and finding the best possible ways to honor his accomplishments.

The commission states: "During the gravest crisis in American history, Lincoln preserved the Union, led the effort to eradicate slavery, and articulated the best aspirations of American democracy. We propose recalling these accomplishments in ways that will enlighten and inspire us both today and tomorrow. Remembering our past, we can better light the way to our future."

For the next 2 years, there are numerous events scheduled to commemorate Abraham Lincoln. They include a rededication of the Lincoln Memorial here in Washington, DC, in 2009, citizenship ceremonies at Lincoln sites throughout that year, a redesigned 2009 penny series and \$5 bill series, a 2009 bicentennial commemorative dollar coin and commemorative stamps.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the swift passage of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, on the 199th anniversary of his birth in Hardin County, Kentucky.

In the history of this great Nation, the Presidency of Abraham Lincoln can be counted among the best of the best. President Lincoln saved the Union not only from its dissolution through the Civil War, but from its own immoral practice of slavery.

From his earlier years in Kentucky and Illinois to his time in the State legislature and his term in this House, Abraham Lincoln developed a political animus fueled by an unshakeable belief in the natural rights espoused by the Founding Fathers four score and 87 years before he dedicated that sacred ground at Gettysburg. Those natural

rights were most clearly enumerated by the Declaration of Independence as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Addressing Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1861, President Lincoln credited the wisdom of the Fathers with absolute clarity. "I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence," so he spoke.

President Lincoln's service to his country began in 1832 when he served with distinction and was elected to the rank of captain of an Illinois militia company in the Black Hawk War. That military service preceded his entry into politics when he was elected to the State legislature in 1834, where he served the citizens of Sangamon County until 1840.

In 1846, President Lincoln moved on to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, serving one term before he decided not to seek reelection and return to private practice as a lawyer. Spurred by the turmoil that gripped the Nation after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, Lincoln decided to reenter the public arena, lending his clarion voice to the cause of liberty.

□ 1645

While speaking on the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in Peoria, Illinois, in July, 1854, then former Congressman Lincoln declared, "No man is good enough to govern another man without the other's consent."

In August 1858, Lincoln wrote, "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy."

In his letter to Massachusetts Representative Henry L. Pierce in 1859, Lincoln wrote, "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves."

In 1860, Abraham Lincoln took his political and moral philosophy to the White House in the midst of a national crisis that would lead the Nation to civil war. Abraham Lincoln's singular vision that the Union must be preserved guided this Nation through its darkest days.

Reelected with a clear majority in 1864, Lincoln saw the forces of liberty prevail as the war ended with the Union intact and slavery abolished. On April 15, 1865, a mere 6 weeks into his second term, President Lincoln was struck down by an assassin's bullet.

Two hundred years after he was born and 143 years after he sacrificed his life for his country, Abraham Lincoln is bound up in the mystic chords of our national memory as the man who fulfilled the promises of liberty and equality and humanity first put forth in our founding Declaration.

Mr. Speaker, the originator of this resolution, DON MANZULLO, is on a plane, so obviously we can't yield him time. But I do want to point out that he offered this resolution and he has a

statement which will be inserted into the RECORD.

I would just like to say that on the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's birth, Carl Sandberg, addressed Congress in this Chamber after it had officially adjourned. I highly recommend his address to anyone who loves this great American President.

Mr. Sandberg pointed out that Lincoln went to Gettysburg believing he would lose the next election, and in spite of that, instead of doing what political consultants would urge someone to do today, speak angrily about the South who couldn't vote for him, to unite the North to support him, Sandberg pointed out Lincoln spoke of the "brave men living and dead who fought here." He didn't speak of North or South. This magnificent President was trying to heal the Nation. That came first. And as Carl Sandberg points out, this was at a time when American families had their sons fighting on both sides, and in one particular instance in one battle, a family lost both sons, one in Confederate gray and the other in northern blue. And they buried them on top of each other, with these words "Only God knows which one was right."

We can never study enough about this great President. The lessons he teaches us are lessons that we all could benefit from, still today, and in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for his passion and for his comments on the life and work of Abraham Lincoln.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, H. Con. Res. 281 celebrates the birth of Abraham Lincoln and recognizes the prominence the Declaration of Independence played in the development of his beliefs.

I am honored and pleased to stand with my friends in the Illinois delegation as we honor our 16th President on his 199th birthday and kick off the nationwide bicentennial celebration of his birth.

Abraham Lincoln has achieved universal recognition as one of the greatest Presidents in American history. Today we recognize the life and legacy of the man who had the moral courage and political acumen to end the abominable practice of slavery in America and to save an imperiled Union from secession and civil war.

We also emphasize the prominent role the Declaration of Independence played in President Lincoln's political philosophy. President Lincoln often cited the Declaration of Independence as a basis for his opposition to slavery and as his inspiration for saving the Union. On his inaugural journey to Washington, President Lincoln stopped in Philadelphia at the site where the Declaration of Independence had been signed and declared, "I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence." In the Gettysburg Address, he defined the end of the war as a rededication to the ideals of that founding document.

H. Con. Res. 281 calls upon the President to issue an annual proclamation recognizing

the anniversary of the birth of our 16th President. It recognizes the activities of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, which initiates two years of commemorations beginning on February 12, 2008. It also encourages local governments and schools to spend sufficient time studying President Lincoln and his devotion to the Declaration of Independence. I urge my colleagues to give their enthusiastic support to this important legislation.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, it is with a great honor and a sense of humility as the senior Republican from the Land of Lincoln that I offer this resolution to celebrate the birthday of our Nation's 16th President. I want to first offer my deep thanks and gratitude to the chairman and ranking minority member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Mr. WAXMAN of California and Mr. DAVIS of Virginia, respectively, for allowing this resolution to come up on the floor to coincide with President Lincoln's birthday. I recognize that this was an unusual procedure and that normal committee protocol was waived to expedite consideration of this resolution to time with Lincoln's birthday today. I also want to offer my profound appreciation to my good friend and fellow Illinoisan, Representative DANNY DAVIS of Chicago, who made all of this possible to happen today.

Abraham Lincoln was born 199 years ago today to Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks at Knob Creek Farm near Hodgenville, Kentucky, in Hardin County. Today starts a series of celebrations over the next 2 years to commemorate the life of Abraham Lincoln based on the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act, which was signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 2000. These commemorations include a special kick-off ceremony at Lincoln's boyhood home, the redesign of the Lincoln penny, a special bicentennial postage stamp, a rededication of the Lincoln Memorial, and a special joint session or meeting of Congress for ceremonies and activities related to Abraham Lincoln. I am absolutely delighted that the House will join in this kick-off celebration in Kentucky, albeit delayed because of an ice storm, with the debate over this resolution. This resolution will continue honoring Lincoln's legacy beyond the next 2 years by requesting the President to issue a proclamation every year in his honor as he does for many other great figures of American history.

In the fall of 1816, Thomas and Nancy Lincoln packed their belongings and their two children—Sarah, 9, and Abraham, 7—and left Kentucky bound for the new frontier of Spencer County in southern Indiana. Abraham Lincoln lived in Indiana for the next 14 years until he was 21 years old. However, in October 1818, when Abraham was 9 years old, his mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, died. His feelings for her were still strong some 40 years later when he said, "All that I am or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

In 1830, Thomas Lincoln, then re-married, decided to move the family to another new frontier—this time to the tiny village of Decatur, Illinois, located in Macon County. Hard working and intellectually inquisitive, Abraham Lincoln's first foray into public service came in 1832 when he was elected and served as a captain of an Illinois militia company during the Black Hawk War. Following his military service, Lincoln was elected to the Illinois legislature in 1834 from Sangamon County and was successively reelected until 1840. In

1846, Abraham Lincoln was elected to serve in this great House, where he ably represented central Illinois in the seat now held by my good friend and colleague, Representative RAY LAHOOD.

Lincoln grew to prominence as an attorney and a legislator with a reputation for fairness, honesty, and a belief that all men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. He founded these beliefs in the ideals of the Declaration of Independence—a document which, as President, he would cite frequently as his inspiration for saving the Union and as the basis for his opposition to slavery. During a speech at Independence Hall in 1861, Lincoln stated, "I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence . . . [it is these sentiments] which gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but, I hope, to the world, for all future time." Lincoln's belief in the principles espoused by the Declaration formed the motivating moral and natural law principle for his opposition to the spread of slavery and his belief in slavery's ultimate demise.

Lincoln found his belief in the equality of men to be directly at odds with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1856. This legislation promulgated the concept of "popular sovereignty"—the idea that State citizens should be able to determine the presence of slavery in their State by popular referendum. Lincoln's strong feelings against the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act propelled Lincoln to return to politics, and he began a bid for the U.S. Senate.

During his campaign for the Senate, Lincoln engaged in a series of seven debates with his opponent, Stephen Douglas. Now known as the Lincoln-Douglas debates, Lincoln's eloquence and studied opposition to the spread of slavery brought him into national prominence.

The second of these debates was held in Freeport, Illinois, a city in the district that I am privileged to represent, and was the origin of what is now known as the "Freeport Doctrine." Cornered by Lincoln into choosing between the notion of popular sovereignty or the prohibition against outlawing slavery put forth by the infamous Dred Scott Supreme Court decision, Stephen Douglas responded that slavery could be prevented from any territory by the refusal of the people living in that territory to pass laws favorable to slavery. Likewise, if the people of the territory supported slavery, legislation would provide for its continued existence. While this doctrine would see Douglas reelected to the Senate over Lincoln, it would be a key factor in his loss in the 1860 Presidential election.

Lincoln's performance in the debates won him national prominence and a reputation for courage, character, and patriotism. These factors played heavily into his election to office as the 16th President of the United States on November 6, 1860.

Upon taking office, Lincoln was thrust into the throes of the Civil War. Leading a partitioned Union, Lincoln relied heavily on his political ideals born of the Declaration of Independence. On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued what would become the most iconic document of his Presidency—the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all the slaves in southern States that seceded from the Union. His com-

mitment to the promises of the Declaration of Independence were further evidenced in the opening lines of his greatest speech at Gettysburg: "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

On November 8, 1864, Abraham Lincoln was reelected to the Presidency by 55 percent of the popular vote. He continued to act as a courageous and principled leader until he was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth on April 14, 1865. Abraham Lincoln died on April 15, 1865.

Abraham Lincoln's profound and courageous belief in the equality of men and the sacredness of the American Union propelled him forward as one of the greatest Presidents our Nation has known. Last Sunday, at a White House ceremony honoring Abraham Lincoln, President George W. Bush said, "he, of all the successors to George Washington, none had greater impact on the presidency and on the country . . . He was a fabulous man, a great President. His life was one of humble beginnings, and steadfast convictions. And so we celebrate his deeds, we lift up his ideals, and we honor this good man."

Lincoln is a hero to so many of us here in this House on both sides of the aisle, as he is to me. The prominence of President Abraham Lincoln is an undisputed fact of American history. The man best known for freeing the slaves and saving an imperiled Union has attained iconic status among historians and citizens alike as evidenced by best selling books such as *Team of Rivals* by Doris Kearns Goodwin that documented the political genius of Lincoln in winning the Presidency and governing the Nation.

And yet, this man of great genius, compassion and acumen lacks official Federal recognition for the day of his birth, February 12, because what is popularly known as President's Day is legally Washington's Birthday. While I do not wish to diminish the contributions George Washington made to the establishment of this great country, this resolution will finally give Lincoln his due without the cost of a separate Federal holiday by simply requesting the President each year to issue a proclamation honoring this great man and encouraging the people of the United States to observe his birthday with appropriate ceremonies and activities. The resolution also encourages State and local governments and local educational agencies to study and appreciate the reverence and respect Abraham Lincoln had for the Declaration of Independence in the development of American history, jurisprudence, and the spread of freedom around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring Abraham Lincoln today and in recognizing the profound influence the Declaration of Independence had upon Lincoln's political philosophy as a model for us to emulate.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 281.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 11, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on February 11, 2008, at 4:12 p.m. and said to contain a message from the President whereby he submits the Economic Report of the President and the 2008 Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

ECONOMIC REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 110-83)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Joint Economic Committee and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Over the past 6 years of economic expansion, the American economy has proven its strength and resilience. Job creation grew uninterrupted for a record period of time, inflation remains moderate, unemployment is low, and productivity continues to grow. The economy is built upon a strong foundation, with deep and sophisticated capital markets, flexible labor markets, low taxes, and open trade and investment policies.

Americans should be confident about the long-term strength of our economy, but our economy is undergoing a period of uncertainty, and there are heightened risks to our near-term economic growth. To insure against these risks, I called upon the Congress to enact a growth package that is simple, temporary, and effective in keeping our economy growing and our people working.

There is more we should do to strengthen our economy. First, we

must keep taxes low. Unless the Congress acts, most of the tax relief that we have delivered over the past 7 years will be taken away and 116 million American taxpayers will see their taxes rise by an average of \$1,800. The tax relief of the past few years has been a key factor in promoting economic growth and job creation and it should be made permanent. We must also work together to tackle unfunded obligations in entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, I have laid out a detailed plan in my Budget to restrain spending, cut earmarks, and balance the budget by 2012 without raising taxes.

Second, we must trust Americans with the responsibility of homeownership and empower them to weather turbulent times in the market. My Administration has acted aggressively to help credit-worthy homeowners avoid foreclosure. We launched a new initiative called FHASecure to help families refinance their homes. I signed legislation to protect families from higher taxes when lenders forgive a portion of their home mortgage debt. We have also brought together the HOPE NOW alliance, which is helping many struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure by facilitating the refinancing and modification of mortgages. The Congress can do more to help American families keep their homes by passing legislation to reform Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, modernize the Federal Housing Administration, and allow State housing agencies to issue tax-free bonds to help homeowners refinance their mortgages.

Third, we must continue opening new markets for trade and investment. We have an unprecedented opportunity to reduce barriers to global trade and investment through a successful Doha round. The Congress should also approve our pending free trade agreements. I thank the Congress for its approval of a good agreement with Peru, and ask for the approval of agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. These agreements will benefit our economy by providing greater access for our exports and supporting good jobs for American workers, and they will promote America's strategic interests. I have asked the Congress to reauthorize and reform trade adjustment assistance so that we can help those workers who are displaced by trade to learn new skills and find new jobs.

Fourth, we must make health care more affordable and accessible for all Americans. I have proposed changes in the tax code that would end the bias against those who do not receive health insurance through their employer and would make it easier for many uninsured Americans to obtain insurance. This reform would put private health care coverage within reach for millions. My Budget also improves access to health care by increasing the power of small employers, civic groups, and community organizations to negotiate lower-priced health premiums.

These policies would encourage competition among health plans across State lines, help reduce frivolous lawsuits that increase patients' costs, and promote the use of health savings accounts.

Fifth, we must increase our energy security and confront climate change. Last year, I proposed an ambitious plan to reduce U.S. dependence on oil and help cut the growth of greenhouse gas emissions. I am pleased that the Congress responded, and I was able to sign into law a bill that will increase fuel economy and the use of alternative fuels, as well as set new efficiency mandates on appliances, light bulbs, and Federal Government operations. In my State of the Union Message, I proposed that we take the next steps to accelerate technological breakthroughs by funding new technologies to generate coal power that captures carbon emissions, advance emissions-free nuclear power; and invest in advanced battery technology and renewable energy. I am also committing \$2 billion to a new international clean technology fund that will help developing nations make greater use of clean energy sources. Additionally, my Budget proposes to protect the economy against oil supply disruptions by doubling the capacity of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Finally, a strong and vibrant education system is vital to maintaining our Nation's competitive edge and extending economic opportunity to every citizen. Six years ago, we came together to pass the No Child Left Behind Act, and no one can deny its results. Now we must work together to increase accountability, add flexibility for States and districts, reduce the number of high school dropouts, and provide extra help for struggling schools.

Many of these issues are discussed in the 2008 Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers. The Council has prepared this Report to help policymakers understand the economic conditions and issues that underlie my Administration's policy decisions. By relying on the foundation and resilience of our economy, trusting the decisions of individuals and markets and pursuing pro-growth policies, we should have confidence in our prospects for continued prosperity and economic growth.

GEORGE W. BUSH,
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 2008.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 8, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II