

plan that had been negotiated by congressional leaders of both parties and my administration. Unfortunately, the measure was defeated by a narrow margin. I'm disappointed by the outcome, but I assure our citizens and citizens around the world that this is not the end of the legislative process.

Producing legislation is complicated, and it can be contentious. It matters little what a path a bill takes to become law; what matters is that we get a law. We're at a critical moment for our economy, and we need legislation that decisively address the troubled assets now clogging the financial system, helps lenders resume the flow of credit to consumers and businesses, and allows the American economy to get moving again.

I recognize this is a difficult vote for Members of Congress. Many of them don't like the fact that our economy has reached this point, and I understand that. But the reality is that we are in an urgent situation, and the consequences will grow worse each day if we do not act. The dramatic drop in the stock market that we saw yesterday will have a direct impact on the retirement accounts, pension funds, and personal savings of millions of our citizens. And if our Nation continues on this course, the economic damage will be painful and lasting.

And I know many Americans are especially worried about the cost of the legislation. The bill the House considered yesterday commits up to 700 billion taxpayer dollars to purchase troubled assets from banks and other financial institutions. That, no question, is a large amount of money. We're also dealing with a large problem. But to put that in perspective, the drop in the stock market yesterday represented more than a trillion dollars in losses.

Furthermore, both the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office and the Office of Management and Budget expect that the legislation considered would ultimately cost the taxpayer far less than the 700 billion, because the Government would be purchasing troubled assets and selling them once the market recovers. It is likely that many of the assets would go up in value over time. Ultimately, we expect that much, if not all, of the tax dollars we invest will be paid back.

As much as we might wish the situation were different, our country is not facing a choice between government action and the smooth functioning of the free market. We're facing a choice between action and the real prospect of economic hardship for millions of Americans. And for the financial security of every American, Congress must act.

My administration will continue to work closely with leaders of both parties on Capitol Hill. I appreciate their determined efforts. While Congress is out today for the Jewish holiday, my administration will be talking to congressional leaders today about how we can move legislation forward when Members begin returning to the Capitol tomorrow. Our economy is depending on decisive action from the Government. The sooner we address the problem, the sooner we can get back on the path of growth and job creation. This is what elected leaders owe the American people, and I am confident we'll deliver.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 a.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 3997. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Signing the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009

September 30, 2008

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2638, the "Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009." The Act, consisting of five divisions, consolidates into a single Act several appropriations bills. It provides through emergency supplemental appropriations additional Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 resources needed for relief and recovery from hurricanes, floods, and other disasters, and other supplemental appropriations.

The Act also includes full-year FY 2009 appropriations for the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security and for Military Construction and Veterans Affairs. Furthermore, the Act provides

FY 2009 appropriations to continue operations of the Federal Government through March 6, 2009, for projects and activities not otherwise covered in the full-year bills. This Act lifts the legislative moratoria on oil and gas leasing on significant portions of the Outer Continental Shelf and the prohibition on the completion of regulations for commercial leasing of oil shale, which will allow us to reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

I am disappointed that the Congress passed a long-term continuing resolution. There is much work to be done, and the Congress should not adjourn for the year without finishing important business on spending, taxes, and free trade agreements.

Finally, this legislation contains certain provisions similar to those found in prior appropriations bills passed by the Congress that might be construed to be inconsistent with my Constitutional responsibilities. To avoid such potential infirmities, the executive branch will interpret and construe such provisions in the same manner as I have previously stated in regard to similar provisions.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 30, 2008.

NOTE: H.R. 2638, approved September 30, was assigned Public Law No. 110–329.

Message on the Observance of Eid al-Fitr

September 30, 2008

I send greetings to Muslims everywhere celebrating Eid al-Fitr, the Festival of Breaking the Fast.

During the three-day festival of Eid al-Fitr, Muslims celebrate the completion of their fast and the blessings of a renewed faith. On this special occasion, families and friends around the globe gather to share traditional foods and congratulate each other on meeting the test of Ramadan.

Our Nation has millions of citizens who practice Islam, and our country benefits from their many contributions. This holiday is also an opportunity for Muslims to reflect on Islam's vibrant culture, which has enriched civilization for centuries.

Laura and I send our best wishes. Eid Mubarak.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Proclamation 8296—To Modify Duty-Free Treatment Under the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act and For Other Purposes

September 30, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

1. Section 213A(b) of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (19 U.S.C. 2703a(b)) (the “CBERA”), as amended by section 15402(a)(2) of the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act of 2008 (part 1 of subtitle D of title XV of Public Law 110–246, 122 Stat. 2289) (the “HOPE II Act”), provides that preferential tariff treatment may be provided for certain apparel and other articles originating in Haiti that are imported directly from Haiti or the Dominican Republic into the customs territory of the United States.

2. Pursuant to section 213A(f)(3) of CBERA (19 U.S.C. 2703a(f)(3)), as redesignated by section 15403(2) of the HOPE II Act (122 Stat. 2302), apparel and other articles described in section 213A(b) of CBERA that are shipped from the Dominican Republic to the United States directly or through the territory of an intermediate country shall not qualify for the preferential tariff treatment provided for under section 213A(b) until the President certifies to the Congress that Haiti and the Dominican Republic have developed procedures to prevent unlawful transshipment of the articles and the use of counterfeit documents related to the importation of the articles into the United States.

3. I have determined, and hereby certify, that Haiti and the Dominican Republic have developed the procedures described in section 213A(f)(3) of CBERA.