

We also share the mission of spreading the blessings of liberty around the world. In October of this year, millions of Afghans, including millions of women, voted peacefully to elect a leader of moderation. We're working together for stability and prosperity in Haiti and the Sudan. With Canada's generous contribution, the reconstruction of Iraq will help that nation become a peaceful democracy.

Our efforts in these troubled regions are driven by our faith, faith in the ability of liberty to unite different cultures, races, and religions and faith in the ability of liberty to lift up people, to offer an alternative to hate and violence, and to change the world for the better.

And so, Mr. Prime Minister, in admiration for all you've done to create a world governed by liberty and justice and friendship, I offer a toast to you, to the people of Canada, and to the friendship of our two peoples.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:15 p.m. at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. In his remarks, he referred to Sheila Martin, wife of Prime Minister Martin; former Prime Ministers Jean Chretien and John Napier Turner of Canada; Lt. Gen. E.A. Findley, Canadian Forces, deputy commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command; and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan. The Canadian Museum of Civilization is located across the Ottawa River from Ottawa, Ontario. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Martin.

### **Statement on Signing the Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act of 2004**

*November 30, 2004*

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 3936, the "Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act of 2004." The Act is designed to strengthen the management and administration of health care facilities and programs for our Nation's veterans.

Section 414(e)(4)(D) of the Act requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Secretary) to include, in a written notice of a mission change for any of several departmental medical facilities, an analysis of any alternatives to the mission change proposed by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The executive

branch shall construe this provision in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch and to withhold information the disclosure of which could impair the deliberative processes of the Executive or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties.

Section 501(c) of the Act purports to require the Secretary to submit to the Congress recommendations for changes in law in certain circumstances. The executive branch shall implement this provision in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch and to recommend for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President judges necessary and expedient.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
November 30, 2004.

NOTE: H.R. 3936, approved November 30, was assigned Public Law No. 108-422. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 1. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

### **Remarks in Halifax, Canada**

*December 1, 2004*

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Thank you all very much. Thanks for the warm welcome. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you, and Mrs. Martin, for a fantastic dinner last night in Ottawa. We really loved it. My only regret today is that Laura is not with me. She is—went home to thank those who have been decorating the White House for the great Christmas season that's coming up. I married well. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate the Premiers who are here. Premier Hamm, thank you for your hospitality. Premier Lord, Premier Binns, and Premier Williams, I appreciate you all joining. I want to specifically mention the Premiers because, as an ex-Governor, I feel a special kinship to those who—[*laughter*—]—run the provinces here in Canada. But thank you for your service. Ambassador Cellucci, mayors, local officials, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to be with you