

[Update from U.S. Senator John Cornyn](#)

April 1, 2004

As we continue through this session of Congress, it's sometimes easy to get too focused on "inside the beltway" arguments. While government has a role to play in defending our freedoms and our citizens, I also believe that we in Washington should remember to respect the innovation of the private sector, the importance of strong families, and the ability of free people, working in their communities and states, to accomplish more than any government program or bureaucrat. So I've continued working hard in the past month to represent you by bringing Texas values to Washington.

### **Supporting Our Military**

As we continue to make progress in the War on Terror, we must recognize the importance of supporting our military. This past month, I met with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Richard Myers, and Deputy Undersecretary of Defense Ray DuBois to make the case for stationing troops at Texas facilities, and support Texas interests in the upcoming round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I'm committed to ensuring that our military is not negatively affected by BRAC, but rather strengthened. Texas bases have great community support and excellent training facilities. One in ten military personnel already call Texas home, and I believe that in this time of crisis, we need to make sure that we're giving those troops all the tools and training necessary to bring those who would threaten the lives of American citizens to justice.

### **Defending Traditional Marriage**

I held hearings in the Senate Judiciary Committee this month on the critical issue of defending traditional marriage. The President recently announced his support of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution preserving marriage between a man and a woman, and we discussed the language of the primary amendment introduced in the Congress. The threat to traditional marriage is now a federal threat, and I believe some type of federal constitutional amendment is the only way to preserve traditional marriage laws nationwide. Activists on the courts and in the streets accuse others of wanting to write discrimination into the Constitution, yet they are the ones writing the American people out of our constitutional democracy. The institution of marriage is enormously important, and it deserves no less than the most representative process in the land. America needs stable marriages and stable families, and we have a duty to act to protect this positive social good, and not ignore this issue until it is too late.

### **Reforming Child Support**

Recently, I introduced bipartisan legislation to fundamentally reform the child support collection system, including speeding payments for children and encouraging innovative local programs. The Child Support Improvement Act of 2004 (S. 2194) is based on my own experience as Attorney General in Texas. It will bring several long-needed reforms to our child support collection system that will lower costs, increase efficiency, encourage self-sufficiency, and get children more of the help they need. It promotes early intervention of child support orders, cutting red tape so that states have greater freedom to innovate and large amounts of unpaid support never build up. We need a child support system that focuses on the dead beat and dead broke parents, that brings the worst evaders in, and that puts the family first.

### **Protecting Unborn Victims of Violence**

The Congress recently passed, and the President will soon sign, the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. I was proud to co-sponsor this bill in the Senate, which establishes that if an unborn child is injured or killed during a violent crime, prosecutors may bring two charges on behalf of both mother and child. After passing the partial-birth abortion ban last year, this is another key step toward building a culture that values every human life, from conception to natural death. Children are precious gifts and should be protected by the full extent of the law from such brutal and vicious acts.

### **Strengthening Homeland Security**

I announced this month that the Department of Homeland Security will provide a grant of more than \$115 million to Texas, in addition to Urban Area Security Initiative Grants worth more than \$39 million. Even as we are dedicated to completing the tasks

before us in the War on Terror around the world, we must remain focused on critical security needs here at home. We must work together to equip and support our critical first responders — our hometown security. We cannot allow ourselves to be ill-prepared in the face of another attack.

### **Bolstering Jobs and Economic Opportunity**

When it comes to the economy, I believe we're on the right track to recovery. Home-ownership is at an all-time high in this country. Interest rates are low. Productivity is booming. The gross domestic product is growing by leaps and bounds. And while some are talking in feverish tones about job loss, unemployment is down to 5.6%, same as it was in 1998. I support the job training and community college initiatives that President Bush has endorsed, and I believe they're a good step. But we in government must continue to take all the steps necessary to support free market innovation, encourage job creation, and get our economy growing again. We need to make America and Texas the most business and jobs friendly places on the planet.

### **Come See Me**

If you're traveling to Washington for business or pleasure, I would greatly appreciate the chance to say hello while you're here. I have an open house in my office, Hart Senate Office Building , Room 625, from 9:00 to 9:30 AM every Tuesday while Congress is in session, so I can greet and talk with Texans who are here. Please call Denise Pleasant in my office at (202) 224-2934 to let me know you'll be coming.

Best regards,

Senator John Cornyn