

with a master's degree in divinity and was ordained at St. Peter's Church in Lake Andes on the Yankton Sioux Reservation. He served there 6 years as priest before moving to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation for another 6 years and ultimately returning home to the Rosebud Sioux Reservation.

His return home led him down a different path of service he was elected chairman of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. He had many accomplishments during his tenure as leader of the tribe; most notably was the opening of Sinte Gleska University in 1971. His desire to serve also led him to work for the Aberdeen Area Indian Health Service and was also appointed by former Gov Bill Janklow as the commissioner for the South Dakota Tribal Government Relations Office from 1996 until 2003. As well, he serves on the board of directors for the Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place.

Currently, Reverend Two Hawk is working to rebuild the congregation in his hometown of White River, SD. I take this opportunity to commend Rev. Webster Two Hawk for his lifetime of service to his congregation and to his tribe. Both are certainly thankful for his efforts.●

TRIBUTE TO KEN HARPER

● Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, today I wish honor Ken Harper, a fellow Arkansan who has embraced the spirit of patriotism. Not only has he served our country in the military, but he has created inspirational poetry and a special commemorative gift to veterans. Ken Harper has a unique talent for writing poetry of a "military significance" and "significance of character" that gives inspiration to those who read it.

Ken Harper proudly served in the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Army. He served a tour of duty with the U.S. Navy beginning in 1979. In 1985, he chose to continue his military career by serving in the U.S. Army. After his military service was completed, Ken still had the desire to serve.

Inspired by the fallen sailors and marines of Pearl Harbor, Ken requested a few American flags to be flown from military memorials and ships on behalf of some retired veterans he knew. The success of this motivated him to have more flags flown in dedication of other veterans. Later, he would have two special flags he claims as his own raised on several naval ships and even on board a NASA space ship.

Because Ken Harper has selflessly honored so many, today we honor him for his efforts, talents, and service to our country.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

ECONOMIC REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT DATED FEBRUARY 2008 WITH THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS FOR 2008—PM 37

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Joint Economic Committee:

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 FHA Secure 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