

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 10, 2006

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AFTER MEETING WITH VICTIMS OF IDENTITY THEFT

The Roosevelt Room

2:27 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Identity theft is a serious problem in America. I have just listened to the horror stories from fellow citizens who have had their identities stolen. I listened to their ideas about how the federal government can help in the response in not only dealing with those who commit the crime, but helping those who have been victimized. And I want to thank you all for joining us. Thanks a lot.

I appreciate Al Gonzales and Chairman Majoras, Deb Majoras, of the FTC for being here, because I just signed an executive order that has the Attorney General as the Chairman, the Chairman of the FTC as the Vice-Chairman of a coordinating group to make sure that this government of ours uses our assets in a responsible way, in a good way, to not only put those people who commit identity fraud in jail, but to help the victims of identity fraud.

I've signed two pieces of legislation which are important, one of which says that credit companies must issue a credit report once a year free of charge. We're very serious about upholding the law in this administration, and credit companies must look at the spirit and the letter of that law, so that when citizens ask for the free credit report on an annual basis, he or she should be given that free credit report.

I signed law enhancing penalties. Now what we're going to do is make sure that the 13 governmental agencies involved with identity theft have a well-coordinated

strategy to help the victims and to put those who commit the theft behind bars.

Again, I want to thank you all very much for helping us understand the issues, but more importantly, telling a story of the emotions and the feelings that you went through during this -- difficult periods of your life.

Thank you.

END

2:29 P.M. EDT