

the submission by the executive branch of specified information or recommendations to the Congress. The executive branch shall construe such provisions in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch, to protect the deliberative processes of the Executive, and to submit to the Congress such recommendations as the President judges necessary and expedient.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 19, 2002.

NOTE: H.R. 4664, approved December 19, was assigned Public Law No. 107-368.

Statement on Signing Legislation To Reauthorize the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998 and For Other Purposes

December 19, 2002

Today I have signed into law H.R. 4883, an Act to reauthorize the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998, and for other purposes.

The executive branch shall construe sections 221(a)(4), 223(b), and 241(a)(2) of the Act as providing statutory bases for revocation of commissions or removal from service that are separate from, in addition to, and not in derogation of the President's constitutional authority to remove officers of the United States. The executive branch also shall construe sections 222 and 224 in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to nominate and appoint candidates who are not the subject of recommendations under those sections.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 19, 2002.

NOTE: H.R. 4883, approved December 19, was assigned Public Law No. 107-372.

Executive Order 13281—Half-Day Closing of Executive Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government on Tuesday, December 24, 2002

December 19, 2002

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. All executive branch departments and agencies of the Federal Government shall be closed and their employees excused from duty for the last half of the scheduled workday on Tuesday, December 24, 2002, the day before Christmas Day, except as provided in section 2 below.

Sec. 2. The heads of executive branch departments and agencies may determine that certain offices and installations of their organizations, or parts thereof, must remain open and that certain employees must report for duty for the full scheduled workday on December 24, 2002, for reasons of national security or defense or other public reasons.

Sec. 3. Tuesday, December 24, 2002, shall be considered as falling within the scope of Executive Order 11582 of February 11, 1971, and of 5 U.S.C. 5546 and 6103(b) and other similar statutes insofar as they relate to the pay and leave of employees of the United States.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 19, 2002.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:04 a.m., December 20, 2002]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on December 23.

Remarks Following Discussions With the Quartet Principals and an Exchange With Reporters

December 20, 2002

President Bush. The Vice President and I are honored to welcome the Quartet Principals to the Oval Office. I want to thank you all for coming. I appreciate so very much