

Remarks on the Nomination of Senator Judd Gregg To Be Secretary of Commerce
February 3, 2009

Good morning, everybody. By now, our economic crisis is well-known. Our economy is shrinking. Unemployment rolls are growing. Businesses and families can't get credit, and small businesses can't secure the loans they need to create jobs and get their products to market.

Now is the time for Washington to act with the same sense of urgency that Americans all across the country feel every single day. With the stakes this high, we cannot afford to get trapped in the same old partisan gridlock. That's why I've worked closely with leaders of both parties on a recovery and reinvestment plan that saves or creates more than 3 million jobs over the next 2 years, cuts taxes for 95 percent of American workers, and makes critical investments in our future—in energy and education, health care, and a 21st century infrastructure.

We will act swiftly, and we will act wisely. The vast majority of the investments in the plan will be made within the next 18 months, immediately creating jobs and helping States avoid painful tax hikes and cuts to essential services. And every dime of the spending will be made available to the public on recovery.gov, so every American can see where their tax dollars are going.

But as we act boldly and swiftly to shore up our financial system and revitalize our economy, we must also make sure that the underpinnings of that economy are sound; that our economic infrastructure is rebuilt to handle the traffic of the global economy; that our cutting-edge science and technology remain the envy of the world; that our policies promote the innovative and competitive nature of this economy and facilitate the incubation and commercialization of our startups and small businesses, the very engine of our job creation.

These are the tasks of the Commerce Department. And I believe that Judd Gregg is the right person to help guide the Department towards these goals.

Judd discovered the family business at an early age. His father, Hugh Gregg, was elected the youngest Governor of New Hampshire when Judd was a boy. At a time when the mills in Nashua closed down and folks were laid off, he watched his dad work tirelessly to attract new industry, the kind that created jobs that carried with them a sense of dignity and self-worth. Judd's father even found the time to publish a book titled, "All I Learned About Politics," and in keeping with his legendary sense of humor, all of its pages were blank.

When the book is written about Judd Gregg, it will tell the story of a man with his own proud record of service on behalf of the American people. As a businessman, attorney, State executive councilor, Congressman, Governor in his own right, and now as a Senator, he's seen from all angles what makes our economy work for communities, businesses, and families, and what keeps it from working better. As former chairman of the Senate Budget Committee and Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Judd has been involved in nearly every facet of public policy. And as Commerce Subcommittee chair on the Senate Appropriations Committee, he's already quite familiar with the Department I've chosen him to lead.

Judd is famous—or infamous, depending on your perspective—on Capitol Hill for his strict fiscal discipline. It's not that he enjoys saying "no," although if it's directed at your bill, you might feel that way. It's that he shares my deep-seated commitment to guaranteeing that our children inherit a future they can afford.

Now, clearly, Judd and I don't agree on every issue; most notably who should have won the election. [*Laughter*] But we agree on the urgent need to get American businesses and families

back on their feet. We see eye to eye on conducting the Nation's business in a responsible, transparent, and accountable manner. And we know the only way to solve the great challenges of our time is to put aside stale ideology and petty partisanship and embrace what works.

As one of the Republican Party's most respected voices and skillful negotiators, Judd is a master of reaching across the aisle to get things done. He'll be an outstanding addition to the depth and experience of my economic team, a trusted voice in my Cabinet, and an able and persuasive ambassador for industry who makes it known to the world that America is open for business.

"Commerce defies every wind, overrides every tempest, and invades every zone." These are the words carved into the walls of the Department that I'm so pleased Judd Gregg has agreed to lead. And as we act boldly to defy the winds of this crisis and outride the tempest of this painful moment, I can think of no finer steward for our Nation's commerce. I expect the Senate's quick confirmation of their esteemed colleague, and I look forward to working with Judd in the years ahead.

And I'd like Judd to say just a few words.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:59 a.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-designate Gregg.

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