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But I want to thank them for coming out and working hard on the trails. It's a—it's got to be a fantastic educational experience to get out in this beautiful part of our country and put something back into the system. After all, that's really what makes America great, when people realize that patriotism means serving something greater than yourself, serving the country you love, doing your part to make sure that the community in which you live is as good as it can possibly be, loving a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. Whether it be maintaining park roads or helping somebody who hurts, helping somebody who's addicted, we can all make a difference in changing our country.

And that's what the Harmans are doing. I ran into Terry and Holly Harman. Terry and Holly challenged me to a 6-mile run. [*Laughter*] I took one look at them; I said, "No thanks." [*Laughter*] But the Harmans are here. They love to use the park. They ride their bikes; they run. They've enjoyed this park for a lot of years, and part of their enjoyment is to make it a better place for other people. I want to tell you what Terry said. He said volunteering here has helped him feel ownership for the park. You're kind of protective. You realize, in his words, "This is my park too."

Well, it is your park. It's the park of every person who lives in America, and we've got to remember that. We're stewards of the people land. We have an obligation to leave this park a better place than when we found it. And there's no doubt in my mind, thanks to the hard work of the park employees, to the volunteers who come, thanks to a Congress that recognizes that we need to maintain this incredibly important asset for our country, we'll do our job.

Thanks for coming. May God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:17 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Stan Katase, teacher, Woodrow Wilson High School.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Luncheon in Irvine, California
August 15, 2003

Thank you very much. Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks for the friendship. It's great to be back in the great State of California, and it's wonderful to see so many friends from Orange County. I'm honored you all are here. I appreciate the strong financial support you've given.

I want to thank those who have worked so hard to make this a major success. Really what we're doing is, we're laying the foundation for next year's campaign, putting the process in place and the foundation in place for what's going to be a great victory in November of '04.

And I need to count on you, particularly when it comes to energizing the vote, to making sure the grassroots gets our message. I want you to remind your Republican friends, your Democrat friends, your independent friends that this administration is one that is serving all the people of the United States of America.

I'm getting ready—[*laughter*]—and I'm loosening up. [*Laughter*] But the political season will come in its own time. See, I've got a job to do, and right now I'm focused on the people's business. We'll continue to work hard to earn the confidence of the American people by keeping this Nation strong and secure and prosperous and free.

I regret that our First Lady is not with us. I just talked to Laura. She's in Midland visiting her mother, and I'm going to see her tonight for dinner. But she sends her

love, and I tell you, I love her a lot. She is a great lady.

I appreciate my friends Brad Freeman and Gerry Parsky and Mercer Reynolds for working so hard to organize what is going to be a great nationwide effort in terms of collecting the resources necessary to run a viable campaign.

I want to thank Duf Sundheim, the party chairman of the State of California, for his leadership. I'm honored that members of the mighty California congressional delegation are with us, friends of mine, people who work hard on behalf of the citizens of California: Congressmen David Dreier and Ed Royce and Ken Calvert and Congressman Chris Cox. I want to thank them for coming.

I appreciate John Campbell and Bob Pacheco, State reps, people who represented their districts well and who were strong supporters of mine in 2000.

But most of all, I thank you all for coming.

In the last 2½ years, our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to this office to solve problems, not to pass them on to future presidents or future generations. I came to seize opportunities instead of letting them slip away. We are meeting the test of our time.

Terrorists declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. We have captured or killed many key leaders of Al Qaida, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance, and those regimes are no more. Fifty million people in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and now they live in freedom.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. We increased the defense budget to prepare for the threats of a new era. And today, no one in the world can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

Two-and-a-half years ago, we inherited an economy in recession. And then our country was attacked, and we found out that there were some CEOs in America who forgot to tell the truth. We had corporate scandals. War affected the people's confidence. But we acted. We passed tough new laws to hold corporate criminals to account. And to get the economy going again, I have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people.

I believe that when Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, or invest, the whole economy grows, and someone is more likely to find a job. And I understand whose money we spend in Washington. It is not the Government's money; it is the people's money. We're returning more money to people to help them raise their families. We're reducing taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We're providing small businesses with incentives to expand so they can hire people. With all these actions, we are laying the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs across America so that every single citizen in this country can realize the great promise of America.

Two-and-a-half years ago, there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't much action. So I called for and the Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education reform in a generation. We're bringing high standards and strong accountability measures to every public school in America. We believe every child can learn the basics of reading and math, and we expect every school in America to teach the basics of reading and math. This administration is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. The days of excuse-making are over. We expect results in return for Federal money in every classroom in America so that not one child is left behind.

We reorganized our Government to create the Department of Homeland Security to better safeguard our borders and ports and to protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for California manufacturers and farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs. We passed budget agreements to help maintain much needed spending discipline in Washington, DC.

On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle, has kept its word, and has made progress for the American people.

The United States Congress has shared in these great achievements, and I appreciate their hard work. I've got a great relationship with Speaker Hastert and Leader Frist. I'll continue to work with them to change the tone in Washington, DC, and to focus on results as opposed to process and politics.

And those are the kind of people I've assembled in my administration. I have put together a great administration on behalf of the American people. We have no finer Vice President in our Nation's history than Dick Cheney. Mother might have a second opinion. [*Laughter*]

In 2½ years, we've come far, but our work is only beginning. I've set great goals worthy of this great Nation. First, America is committed to expanding the realm of freedom and peace for our own security and for the benefit of the world. And second, in our own country, we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion so that every single citizen, regardless of their background, regardless of their religion, regardless of their status, has a chance to work and to succeed and realize the great promise of our land.

It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home and freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we're keeping it.

Our war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are we. This country will not rest; we will not tire; we will not stop until this danger to civilization is removed.

Yet, our national interest involves more than eliminating aggressive threats to our security. Our greatest security comes from the advance of human liberty. Free nations do not support terror. Free nations do not attack their neighbors. And free nations do not threaten the world with weapons of mass terror. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. And we believe that freedom is the right of every person. And we believe that freedom is the future of every nation.

America also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. We have duties in the world. And when we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, we will not turn away. On the continent of Africa, America is now committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children now suffering with AIDS. I'm so proud of our great land. We're leading the world in this incredibly important work of human rescue.

We face challenges at home, and our actions are equal to those challenges. I will continue to work to lay the foundation for economic growth, to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, to encourage job creation so that anybody who wants to work today and can't find a job will be able to do so.

And we have a duty to keep our commitment to America's seniors by strengthening and modernizing Medicare. A few weeks ago, the Congress took historic action to improve the lives of older Americans. For the first time—the first time—since the creation of Medicare, the House and Senate have passed reforms to increase the choices for our seniors and to provide coverage for prescription drugs. The next step is for both bodies to get together and iron out some details and get a bill to my desk. The sooner they finish the job, the sooner

Americans will get a modernized Medicare system.

And for the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on the frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine. People who have been harmed by a bad doc deserve their day in court. Yet, the system should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for a rich settlement. Because frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, they affect the Federal budget; they affect the Medicare budget, the Medicaid budget, the veterans health care budget. Medical liability reform is a national issue that requires a national solution. The House of Representatives passed a good bill to reform the Senate—the system. It is stuck in the Senate. It is now time for the United States Senate to act on behalf of the patients of America. No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit.

I have a responsibility as President to make sure the judicial system runs well, and I have met that duty. I have nominated superb men and women for the Federal courts, people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench.

In California, I nominated Carolyn Kuhl to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. She is a—tremendous bipartisan support. She's respected as a State judge. Yet, some Senators are distorting her record; they're threatening to block an up-or-down vote. Unfortunately, she's not alone. They're doing that to too many of my nominees, and that is wrong. All judicial nominees deserve a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. It is time for some Members of the United States Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

The Congress needs to complete work on a comprehensive energy plan that, among other things, will help us modernize our infrastructure around America. We must promote energy efficiency and conservation, develop cleaner—develop technology to help us explore for energy in environmentally sensitive ways. But for the sake of economic security and for the sake of national security, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Our strong and prosperous Nation must also be a compassionate nation. I will continue to advance our agenda of compassionate conservatism. We will apply the best and most innovative and effective ideas to the task of helping our fellow citizens in need. There are still millions of men and women who want to end their dependence on Government and become independent through hard work. We must build on the success of welfare reform to bring work and dignity into the lives of more of our fellow citizens.

Congress should complete the "Citizen Service Act" to encourage more Americans to serve their communities and their country. And both Houses should reach agreement on my Faith-Based Initiative so that we can support the armies of compassion which are mentoring children, caring for the homeless, and offering hope to the addicted.

A compassionate society must promote opportunity for every citizen, including the independence and dignity that come from ownership. This administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more people owning their own home. We have a minority homeownership gap in America, and I've got a plan to close that gap. We want people owning their own retirement systems and managing their own retirement systems. We want people controlling their own health care systems. We want more people owning and operating their own small business in America, because we understand that when somebody owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future in the United States of America.

In a compassionate society, people respect one another and take responsibility for the decisions they make. We're changing the culture of America from one that

has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're concerned about the quality of education in your community, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in America, you have the responsibility to tell the truth to your shareholders and your employees.

And in the responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself. And we can see the culture of responsibility and service growing around us here in America. I started what's called the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to a neighbor in need, and the response has been strong. People from all walks of life are signing up to figure out how to help and do their duty as an American citizen.

Charities are strong and the faith-based organizations are vibrant, bringing hope and healing to citizens who hurt. Policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation's uniform are reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than yourself in life. Once again the children believe in heroes, because they see them every day in America.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. And I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. All the tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation. We are a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves.

Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country and for our cause, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:57 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Irvine Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Brad Freeman, California State finance chairman, and Mercer Reynolds, national finance chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; and Gerald L. Parsky, Team California chairman, and Duf Sundheim, party chairman, California Republican Party. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Memorandum on the 2003 Combined Federal Campaign
August 15, 2003

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: 2003 Combined Federal Campaign

I am delighted that the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Mel R. Martinez, has agreed to serve as the Chair of the 2003 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) of the National Capital Area. I ask you to enthusiastically support the CFC by personally chairing the campaign in your agency and appointing a top official as your Vice Chair.

The Combined Federal Campaign is an important way for Federal employees to